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ABSTRACT

The multidisciplinary film project focuses attention on what is happening to rural populations of the world, particularly among developing countries. The roles of women, education, social and economic systems, and the effects of modernization on values are themes explored in each of five rural settings--Bolivian highlands, northern Kenya, northern Afghanistan, Taiwan, and the Soko Islands off the China coast. The project draws upon visual evidence of people at work and play, in social, economic, and political roles, as individuals and in groups. The program features 26 films designed for use in college classes and an accompanying text which contains sets of essays which complement the films. The instructional materials are arranged in a format which covers the five cultures and five themes listed above. A film link symbol in the text indicates a direct relationship to a scene in the film, and the designation "film dialogue" is used to indicate direct quotations from the soundtrack and a direct relationship between the film and the essay. Maps, charts, and graphs are used to provide information about rainfall, migration patterns, political structures, and environmental concepts. (Author/CM)

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FACES

CHANGE

Five Rural Societies in Transition:
Bolivia, Kenya, Afghanistan, Taiwan, China Coast

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Norman N. Miller [Social Sciences]

12. NSF Program Manager
Alexander J. Barton

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15. Abstract

This multidisciplinary curriculum project focuses attention on what is happening to rural populations of the world, particularly among developing countries. The roles of women, education, social and economic systems, and the effects of modernization on values are themes explored in each of five rural settings--Bolivian highlands, northern Kenya, northern Afghanistan, Taiwan, and the Soko Islands off the China coast. The project draws upon visual evidence of people at work and play, in social, economic, and political roles, as individuals and in groups. Twenty six films designed for use in college classes were produced. An accompanying test contains sets of essays which complement the films. These are arranged in a five-by-five format, a matrix which covers the five cultures and five themes listed above. A film link symbol in the text indicates a direct relationship to a scene in the film, and the designation "film dialogue" is used to indicate direct quotations from the soundtrack and a direct relationship between the film and the essay. Maps, charts, and graphs are used to provide information about rainfall, migration patterns, political structures, and environmental concepts.

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FACES OF CHANGE

Five Rural Societies in Transition: Bolivia, Kenya, Afghanistan, Taiwan, China Coast

Norman N. Miller, General Editor

Manon L. Spitzer, Editor

Contributors:
- Sheldon Appleton
- C. Fred Blake
- William E. Carter
- Norma Diamond
- Louis Dupree
- Nancy Hatch Dupree
- Loren Fessler
- Bernard Gallin
- Martha James Hardman
- Dwight B. Heath
- Asmarom Legesse
- Judith von D. Miller
- Norman N. Miller
- Albert Ravenholt
- Thomas G. Sanders
- Hubert Smith

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TO THE READER

Faces of Change is designed to focus attention on what is happening to the rural populations of the world, particularly among developing countries. The purpose is to introduce students not only to other cultures, but also to demonstrate the universal concerns among peoples who differ in many respects and who live under quite varied ecological conditions.

In these pages, and in the films, you can read about and observe people at work and play, in social, economic, and political roles, as individuals and in groups. You will hear them express themselves, exploring their own lives, the natural world, and the supernatural in attempts to fulfill their spiritual needs. Like us, they are all participants in the process of modernization which is characterized by a marked increase in the pace of change.

The world of the late twentieth century is becoming increasingly urban, secular, technology-oriented, and interdependent. For those born into a traditional society based on a subsistence economy, the transition to modern social, economic, and political institutions is inevitably disruptive of their values, attitudes, and lifestyle. By observing early moments in this transition, we are better able to comprehend both the complexity of the traditional society and the process of change itself.

Recognizing the widespread nature of the changes affecting rural life, the American Universities Field Staff, with support from the National Science Foundation, sought to record, in film and in print, the human dimensions of this transition in five rural societies. The approach was unique. Filmmakers worked together with area specialists to produce films that could be used in high school and college classrooms as visual evidence, in effect, as simulated field experience. The scholars prepared essays, collected here, which describe in depth the peoples and cultures depicted in the films.

For some, the changes associated with modernization are just beginning to have an impact on their daily existence. The Aymara Indians of Vitocota, Bolivia, the Boran pastoralists of northern Kenya, the villagers and nomads of Aq Kupruk, Afghanistan—all preserve intact most features of their traditional society. But the signs of change are also evident, whether a new road, a government school, or public health program.

Locations

Bolivia: Munecas Province, an area inhabited by Aymara and Quechua-speaking Indians and mestizos, people of mixed Spanish-Indian descent. 12,000 feet altitude; mixed farming economy, mostly potatoes. The towns of Ayata and Vitocota are approximately 10 road hours northwest of La Paz.

Kenya: Marsabit District, a semi-arid area inhabited by Boran and other tribes of northcentral Kenya. 4,200 feet altitude; pastoral nomadic economy with some maize farming on the mountain. The town of Marsabit is approximately 300 miles (14 road hours) north of Nairobi.

Afghanistan: Balkh Province, an area inhabited by Tajik and other Central Asian peoples. 2,200 feet altitude; wheat growing and pastoral economy. The town of Aq Kupruk is approximately 320 miles (14 road hours) northwest of Kabul.

Taiwan: Tsau Tun Township, an area inhabited by farmers. 300 feet altitude; wet-rice and other mixed vegetable farming. The township of Tsao Tun is approximately 130 miles (3 hours by train) southwest of Taipei.

China Coast: The Soko Islands, the South China Sea, an area inhabited by Cantonese people. 0-200 feet altitude; fishing and farming, mostly pineapples, mixed vegetables, and pigs. Tai A Chau Island, the largest of the Sokos, is three hours by boat southwest of Hong Kong.

In these societies, not everyone will react to changed circumstances in the same way. What are opportunities for some will be perceived as destructive by others. There are differences, for example, in behavior and outlook between tenants and landowners, between poor and rich peasants, between farmers and cultivators who are also craftsmen or shopkeepers, between farmers and pastoralists.

We can learn how change begins among the boys who go to school and the girls who do not, among the women whose children are now less likely to die in infancy. People speak of hopes and aspirations that reveal their vision of the future as well as their experiences of the past. We find certain traditional ways or attitudes persisting. This resistance to change needs as much explanation as change itself, for while inertia may be part of the answer, more practical reasons may also exist.

Among the residents of the Soko Islands off the China Coast, and especially among the farmers of Taiwan, familiar aspects of modernization are much in evidence. Education and public health services, transportation and communications networks, and patterns of commerce link them all in varying degrees to an urban, industry-based society. In these cases we can observe more clearly the psychological distance implied in the changeover from peasant cultivator to modern farmer or factory worker, from village headman to government civil servant, from illiterate subject to educated citizen. We can speculate about the consequences for traditional family life, for instance, when the area of free choice for the individual is enlarged in regard to such decisions as family size or marriage partner.

FILM PROJECT FORMAT

Figure 1

	Society	Education	Economics	Women	Beliefs
Bolivia	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Kenya	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Afghanistan	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Taiwan	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
China Coast	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Main Films
(30-minute format)

Support Films
(18-minute format)

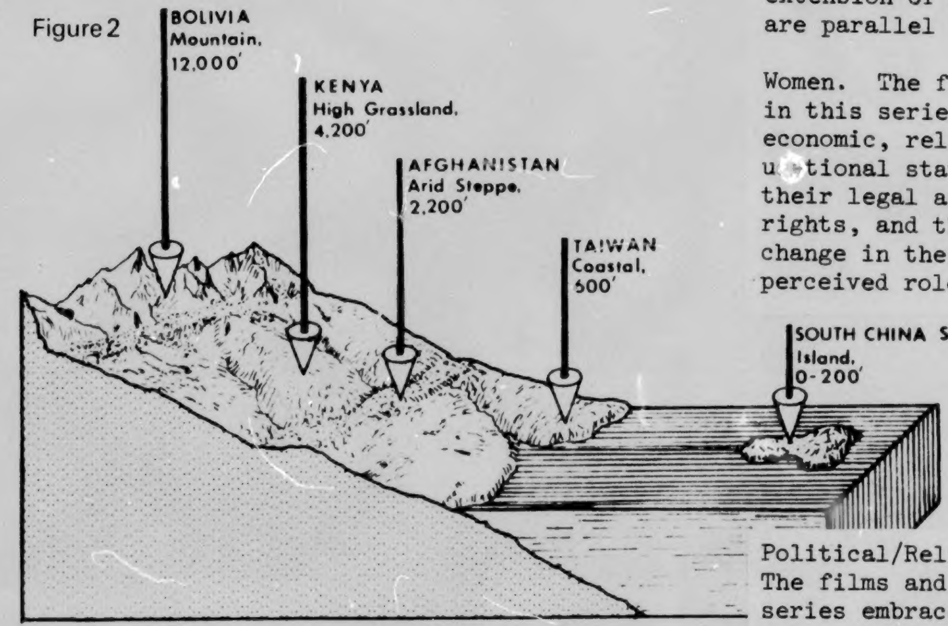
Each set of essays and films recreates a universe of activity as it existed in one area for a specific period of time. As case studies, they are representative of human behavior and illustrative of the persistent nature of certain problems such as the necessity to adjust to the environment, to socialize and educate the young, to provide food, shelter, and security for a family group. The addition of a thematic orientation for the series directs attention to interrelations—the wide variety of solutions to common problems and the interactions between forces making for continuity and those making for change.

How to Use This Book

The essays in this text, like the films they complement, are arranged in a five-by-five format, a matrix covering five cultures and five themes (Figure 1). The locations were selected to portray the diverse ways human beings adapt to the natural environment under different ecological conditions (Figure 2). The five themes were chosen to insure comprehensive representation of each culture and to facilitate comparability among the case studies. In every example, attention was given to the peoples' life cycle and daily routine, their social, economic, and political relationships, and their relationship to the environment.

The use of the *film link* symbol ▭ in the text indicates a direct relationship to a scene in the film. The designation *film dialogue* denotes direct quotation from the soundtrack, also indicating a direct relationship between the film and the essay. *Film biographies* have been included in some cases to accentuate the importance of

Figure 2



Themes

Rural Society. The films and essays in this series explore concepts of development, modernization, environmental equilibrium, and especially change, identifying change agents, and analyzing barriers and stimulants to change.

Education and Socialization. The films and essays in this series examine formal and informal learning systems, and how they are changing. Particular attention is paid to the lives of one or two young people in the educational system, to their family and kinship structure, and more broadly to educational policies in the developing world.

Rural Economics. The films and essays in this series focus on traditional agreculture, herding, and fishing under diverse environmental conditions. The impact of technological change, human adaptation, and governmental extension of market systems are parallel themes.

Women. The films and essays in this series examine the economic, religious, and educational status of women, their legal and customary rights, and the degree of change in their actual and perceived roles.

Political/Religious Beliefs. The films and essays in this series embrace five different and complex units of analysis concerning how political change occurs; individual attitudes, ethnic identity, national loyalties, institutional affiliations, and ideological beliefs.

human decision-making in the process of change. Maps describe each focal region and provide relevant information about rainfall or migration patterns. *Charts* and *graphs* are used to help clarify political structures and environmental concepts.

It is our hope that in using this book, and in finding new ways to learn about other people, we will also enhance the possibilities of learning more about ourselves.

Bolivia Project

Director/Sound
Hubert Smith

Camera
Neil Reichline

AUFS Pre-production Adviser
Richard Patch

Translators
Juana Vasquez
Manuel DeLucca

Film Editors Viracocha
Potato Planters
Andean Women
Magic and Catholicism
Hubert Smith
Michael Akester

[redacted]

BOLIVIA

WILLIAM E. CARTER is Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Florida (Gainesville). He has a B.A. from Muskingum College, an S.T.B. from Boston University, and an M.A. and Ph.D. from Columbia University. He has worked in Uruguay, Bolivia, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and with Puerto Ricans in the United States. His research is wide ranging, covering topics such as land use, agrarian reform, values, religion, social structure, and drug use. From 1965 to 1966 he served as area studies coordinator for Peace Corps training programs at the University of Washington. He is past President of the Southeastern Conference on Latin American Studies, former chairman of the national Consortium for Latin American Studies Programs, and has served as consultant to the U.S. Office of Education and the Foreign Area Fellowship Program. His major works are *Aymara Communities and the Bolivian Agrarian Reform, New Lands and Old Traditions*, and *Bolivia, a Profile*.

MARTHA JAMES HARDMAN, who received her Ph.D. from Stanford, has done extensive research in Bolivia and Peru under National Science Foundation, U.S. Office of Education, and Fulbright grants. She is professor of Linguistics and Anthropology at the University of Florida, with affiliation in the Center for Latin American Studies. She has taught at Cornell University, UCLA, Santa Clara University, Indiana University, and the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Andres in Bolivia. She was founder and first director of INEL (Instituto Nacional de Estudios Linguisticos) in La Paz. She has devoted approximately two decades to the study of the Jaqi family of languages: Jaqaru, Kawki, and Aymara. Publications include *Jaqaru: Outline of Phonological and Morphological Structure, Aymara Ar Yataqanataki* (Manual and Grammar) 3 volumes, and a recent introduction of the Jaqaru alphabet in the schools of Jaqaru-speaking children.

DWIGHT B. HEATH is a Professor of Anthropology at Brown University. He earned his A.B. (in Social Relations) at Harvard University, and his Ph.D. (in Anthropology) at Yale University. During much of his professional career, he has studied a variety of peasant and tribal cultures in different parts of Bolivia, as well as doing anthropological and historical research in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, Spain, and the United States. He has served as consultant to World Health Organization, Peace Corps, Research Institute for the Study of Man, Land Tenure Center, Smithsonian Institution, and National Academy of Sciences. In addition to numerous scholarly articles, his major published works include *Land Reform and Social Revolution in Bolivia* (with C.J. Erasmus and H.C. Buechler), *Contemporary Cultures and Societies of Latin America, Historical Dictionary of Bolivia*, and *Cross-Cultural Approaches to the Study of Alcohol*. He has also made documentary films in Bolivia.

THOMAS G. SANDERS, who reports on several countries of Latin America for AUFS, was formerly an Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Brown University. He received his A.B. in history from Duke University in 1952 and his Ph.D. in religion from Columbia University in 1958. In the early 1960s Dr. Sanders became interested in changes taking place in Latin American Catholicism, spending 1965-66 in Brazil and 1967-68 in Chile, under the auspices of the Institute of Current World Affairs. Since joining the Field Staff in 1968, he has concentrated chiefly on Brazil, Chile, and Mexico. Dr. Sanders is the author of *Protestant Concepts of Church and State, Catholic Innovation in a Changing Latin America*, and numerous articles on Latin American religion, population, education, and politics, in periodicals and anthologies.

NEIL REICHLINE, film essay photographs.

Acknowledgment: The AUFS wishes to express its gratitude to the people of Vitocota and Ayata in Muñecas Province for their hospitality and cooperation.

Kenya Project

Co-Director/Camera
David MacDougall

Co-Director/Sound
James Blue

AUFS Adviser
Norman Miller

Cultural Adviser
Paul Baxter

Film Editors
James Blue
David MacDougall
Kenya Boran(Part I)
Kenya Boran(Part II)

Dai Vaugan
Richard Panter
Boran Herdsmen

Judith von D. Miller
Boran Women

Dai Vaughan
Harambee (Pull together)

KENYA

ASMAROM LEGESSE graduated from Haile Selassie I University of Addis Ababa and received his Ph.D. in anthropology from Harvard. He has taught at Harvard, Chicago, and Northwestern Universities. He is now Professor of Anthropology at Swarthmore College. In addition to numerous scholarly articles, he is the author of *Gada, Three approaches to the Study of African Society* (Free Press, 1973), a major book on the Boran which serves as an important reference source to the Kenya film series.

JUDITH VON D. MILLER is a writer and film editor, the wife of AUFS Associate Norman Miller. She has lived and worked in East Africa for some six years, living in Boranland on three occasions, once as a researcher on the Film Program. Her other writings include a book, *Art in East Africa*, and articles in such journals as *African Art, African Report* (U.S.), and *Art Review* (U.K.).

NORMAN N. MILLER has been concerned with East Africa's anthropology and politics for more than a decade, living for long periods in Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda. Dr. Miller has done research under grants from the Ford Foundation, Carnegie Corporation, and Michigan State University, and has taught at the University of Dar es Salaam and the University of Nairobi. Receiving the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Indiana University, in 1966 he joined the faculty of Michigan State University where he was founder and editor of *Rural Africana*, a research bulletin in the social sciences. He became an Associate Professor in 1969 and shortly thereafter joined the Field Staff to report on East Africa. His publications include an edited volume *Research in Rural Africa*, chapters in several books and articles in the *American Political Science Review*, the *Journal of Modern African Studies*, and the *Canadian Journal of African Studies*. Since 1971 he has been director of the AUFS documentary film program and is concurrently Professor of Community Medicine and Adjunct Professor of anthropology at Dartmouth College.

Acknowledgment: The AUFS wishes to express its gratitude to the people of Marsabit District for their hospitality and cooperation.

AFGHANISTAN

LOUIS DUPREE, who joined the AUFS in 1959, is an anthropologist who has specialized in the Indo-European language areas of the Middle East and Central Asia. Dr. Dupree first visited Afghanistan in 1949 and again in 1950-51 for the American Museum of the University of Pennsylvania. After receiving his Ph.D. degree from Harvard in 1955, Dr. Dupree joined the faculty of Pennsylvania State University where, concurrent with his Field Staff affiliation, he is an Adjunct Professor. In 1973-74, he was a Fellow, American Council of Learned Societies at Kings College, Cambridge. His published works include *Afghanistan*, a new edition of G. Robertson's *Kafirs of the Hindu Kush*, and *Afghanistan in the Seventies*, eleven monographs and numerous articles and reviews in such varied publications as *American Anthropologist, The Nation, The Economist, Evergreen Review*, and the *Middle East Journal*. He is based in Kabul to observe developments in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Soviet Central Asia.

NANCY HATCH DUPREE, who holds an M.A. degree in Chinese from Columbia University, has lived and worked in Afghanistan since 1964. In addition to writing numerous articles on history and folklore, including an *Historical Guide to Afghanistan*, she has served as a UN expert in world development and as a Ford Foundation consultant on rural areas.

LOUIS DUPREE, NANCY HATCH DUPREE, and JOSEPHINE POWELL, film essay photographs.

Acknowledgment: The AUFS wishes to express its gratitude to the people of Aq Kupruk for their hospitality and cooperation. The Afghan Bureau of Consulting Architects and Engineers (ABAD) and its President, N.A. Saberi, were most helpful with maps and drawings, as was Douglas Waugh, the cartographer. I also wish to thank Sultan Hamid for his advice and skill in the printing of many of the photographs.

Afghanistan

Co-Director/Camers
Danid Hancock

Co-Director/Sound
Herbert DiGioia
AUFS Adviser/Sound
Nancy Dupree

AUFS Adviser
Louis Dupree

Second Camera
Josephine Powell

Translator/Camera
Toryali Shafaq

Film Editing
Herbert DiGioia
David Hancock
An Afghan Village
Naim and Jabar
Afghan Nomads: The Maldar

Denis Borrow
Wheat Cycle

Bridget Reiss
Afghan Women

China Coast

Director
Norman Miller

AUFS Adviser
Loren Fessler

Camera
Richard Chen

Sound
George Chang

Translator
Leung Kai Kit
Patrick Mok

Film editing
Stephen Hyde
China Coast Fishing

Judith von D. Miller
Three Island Women

Norman Miller
China Coast Fishing

Dai Vaughan
Hoy Fok and the Island School
Three Island Women

CHINA COAST

C. FRED BLAKE is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Hawaii. He teaches courses on traditional and modern China, East Asia, and General Anthropology. He received his Master's degree from Washington University at St. Louis, and together with his wife, served in the Peace Corps on Agrigan Island in the Northern Marianas. Between 1971 and 1973 he studied the sociocultural relations between different Chinese speech groups in rural Hong Kong, research that was funded by a National Institute of Mental Health grant. He received his Ph.D. degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana. His research interests lie in the study of how cultural identities are formed and used in the sociopolitical process.

LOREN FESSLER, an AUFS Associate, has maintained an interest in China since 1945 when he worked with Chinese Nationalist airborne troops. As a Harvard undergraduate he spent a year at Lingnan University in Canton on an exchange student fellowship. Following graduate work at the University of Washington, Mr. Fessler began a career in East Asian journalism that lasted twelve years. Though he traveled extensively throughout the area, his primary responsibility was China reporting and analysis; his principal employer was Time-Life News Service. He has also written for other publications including the *New York Times*, the *Mainland China Review*, and the *Washington Post*. His book *China* was published in 1963. Returning to Harvard in 1967 to enter the program of Regional Studies—East Asia, he received his M.A. degree in June 1968. An Associate since 1969, Mr. Fessler reports on China and Korea from the vantage point of Hong Kong.

GEORGE CHANG, LOREN FESSLER, CHARLES LOW, film essay photographs.

Acknowledgment: The AUFS wishes to express its gratitude to the people of the Soko Islands for their hospitality and cooperation.

Taiwan Project

Director/Camera
Richard Chen

AUFS Adviser
Albert Ravenholt

Sound
Frank Tsai

Project Assistant
Chin Ming Cheng

Film editing
Richard Chen
Brian Sewell
People are Many, Fields are Small
They Call Him Ah Kung
Wet Culture Rice
A Chinese Farm Wife
The Rural Cooperative

[redacted]

TAIWAN

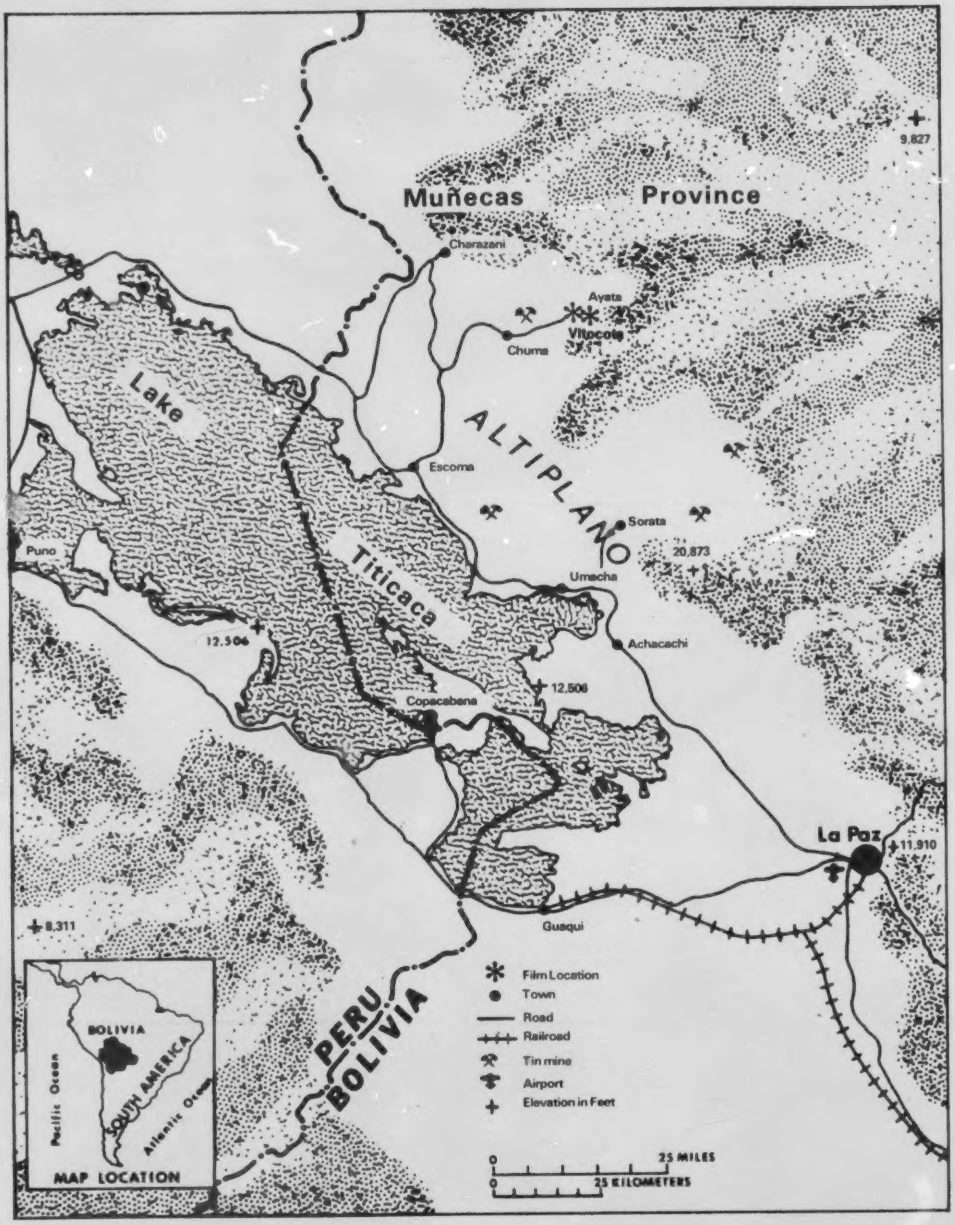
SHELDON APPLETON, currently a professor of Political Science at Oakland University, has been a Foreign Service Officer and a Fulbright Fellow, and has had extensive field and research experience in Taiwan. His major publications include *The Eternal Triangle? Communist China, the U.S. and the U.N.* (1961) and *American Foreign Policy: An Introduction with Cases* (1968) and numerous articles in *Pacific Affairs, The Journal of Asian Studies, Current History, Public Opinion Quarterly, Asian Survey, The China Quarterly, International Studies Quarterly.*

NORMA DIAMOND is a professor of Anthropology at the University of Michigan, where she has taught since 1963. She received her Ph.D. from Cornell University. On her first field trip in 1959-1960, she studied a southern fishing village in Taiwan, as described in her book *Yun Shen: A Taiwan Village*. In subsequent field trips, her research has focused on factory women, middle-class urban women, and women students. She has also published several articles and chapters in books. Her most recent work concerns the role of women in mainland China.

BERNARD GALLIN is a professor and chairman in the Department of Anthropology at Michigan State University. Since 1956, he has spent over four years on four separate field research trips to both rural and urban Taiwan. He was the first American anthropologist to do [illegible] work in Taiwan on Chinese rural society. His book *Hsin Hsing, Taiwan [illegible] Chinese Village in Change*, is a pioneer work published in 1966 and provides an excellent background to the film series. He is also the author of numerous other articles in books and journals which have become essential reading on China. During May and June 1975, Dr. Gallin visited the People's Republic of China, traveling in several rural areas.

ALBERT RAVENHOLT has worked on Asia and [illegible] Western Pacific since before World War II, serving as a correspondent in China, India, Burma, Indochina, and the Philippines. In 1947, as a fellow of the Institute of Current World Affairs, he went to Harvard University for advanced study of Far Eastern history and Chinese language. In 1948 he returned to China to cover the civil war. Mr. Ravenholt joined the Field Staff at its founding in 1951 and covers large areas of Asia from his base in Manila. In addition to his regular Fieldstaff Reports and journal articles, his published works include a book entitled *The Philippines; a Young Republic on the Move*, and chapters in other volumes. Although a generalist on East Asian and Southeast Asian Affairs, Mr. Ravenholt maintains a specialized knowledge of Asian and tropical agriculture.

Acknowledgment: The AUFS wishes to express its gratitude to the of Tsao Tun for their hospitality and cooperation.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ALTIPLANO
Escoma
Sorata
20,873
Umacha
Achacachi
Puno
12,506
12,506
Copacabana
La Paz
11,910
Guaqui
8,311
PERU
BOLIVIA
Film Location
Town
Road
Railroad
Tin mine
Airport
Elevation in Feet
0
25 MILES
0
25 KILOMETERS
BOLIVIA
SOUTH AMERICA
Pacific Ocean
Atlantic Ocean
MAP LOCATION

BOLIVIA

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Rural Society

VIRACOCHA CHANGING INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS IN POST-REVOLUTIONARY BOLIVIA

By DWIGHT B. HEATH

Bolivia is a large country, with a small population, and an enormous range of ecological and cultural diversity. Its size is about twice that of France, or equivalent to Texas and California combined (roughly 1,100,000 km.^{2} or 424,000 mi.^{2}). Its population is about the same as Chicago's (roughly 4.5 million in 1970), and nearly three-fourths of the inhabitants live in the mountainous western one-third of the country, while the vast hot flat jungle and savanna that sprawl east of the Andes are sparsely settled. Although the entire country lies within the tropical latitudes, differences in altitude and other climatological factors make for contrasting worlds that range from perpetually snowcapped peaks in the Andes (some of which are more than 6,100 meters, or 20,000 feet high), to hot and thorny desert in the southeast, from barren windswept plateaus to the dense rain forests in the Amazon basin to the north.

The diversity of peoples and cultures throughout the country is almost as great as the variation in natural environments. More than half of the population speak indigenous languages rather than Spanish, and many still worship, dress, and live much as their ancestors did in pre-Columbian times. There is, of course, a small group of cosmopolites who effectively dominate political, commercial, and other systems at the national level, and a substantial stratum of Spanish-speaking mestizos whose way of life is closely linked to the mainstream of Western culture. Among the many indigenous or Amerindian groups, Quechua-speakers are the most numerous and widespread, still occupying most of the territory that was ruled by the Incas in the sixteenth century. The second largest group are Aymara-speakers; although these two groups are often lumped together by uninformed observers as "Andean Indians," Quechua and Aymara are no more closely related as languages than are English and Russian, and the way of life of the people who speak them also differ markedly. Dozens of other Indian "tribes," some still virtually unstudied and with languages unrelated to any others, are scattered through other parts of the country.

The highland area of what is now Bolivia was conquered by the Spaniards in the middle of the sixteenth century and called Upper Peru (*Alto Perú*). Bolivians take ironic pride in noting that their countrymen were the first in South America to declare their independence from Spain (in 1809), but the last to achieve it (in 1825).

As was the case in most Latin American countries, the people of Bolivia did not gain a significant measure of "representative democracy" even after winning their War of Independence.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is clear that the people of Vitocota and Ayata were patient and helpful, and shared much of their lives with the film crew; without their hospitality and cooperation, these films could never have been made.

The films made by Hubert Smith and Neil Reichline are sensitive ethnographic documents as well as being beautiful and accurate films. Hube's insightful comments on the field experience have helped me to fit the specific details of *Viracocha* into my understanding that is based on familiarity with many other Aymara and mestizo communities in Bolivia. For his discussion of the joys and pains of ethnographic filmmaking in this difficult situation, see Hubert Smith, *A Filmmakers Journal*, Fieldstaff Reports, West Coast South America Series, Vol. XXIII, No. 2, 1976.

As usual AC provided the intellectual and other stimuli that make writing pleasant as well as fruitful.

Virtually all of the nearly 30 constitutions have included eloquent statements about rights of individuals and about government of, by, and for the people, but administrative realities have remained extremely centralized, dominated by small groups.

In successive wars with each of her neighbors, Bolivia gradually lost nearly one-half of her original territory and was left landlocked. A few mines produced most of the exportable wealth—silver and tin—although archaic agriculture occupied most of the people. The contrast between vast mineral wealth on the one hand, and widespread poverty among the peasants on the other, prompted some to speak of "a rich nation with poor people," and others to characterize Bolivia as "a beggar sitting on a throne of gold."

The superficially turbulent political history of Bolivia, marked by frequent *coups d'état*, masked a persistent oligarchical system in which a tiny urban elite took turns in the seats of power, while the vast majority of the populace remained unaffected and uninterested, often unaware of who was president, or even of what nationality meant. To refer to a mere reassignment of the presidential sash of office and change in the palace guard as a "revolution" no longer seems appropriate, especially as our increasing concern with the transcultural understanding of change emphasizes revolution as a process rather than as an historic event.

Film Dialogue

Q: *Where did they [the Aymara] get their fields, their lands?*

Each of these belongs to a community . . . could be Vitocota for example . . .
And then there are the ex-estates . . . haciendas . . . that once belonged to the landlords . . .
But today these estates are liberated and are communities called 'ex-estates.'

Q: *Did their land come from the Agrarian Reform of 1952?*

For these? Much earlier! They were always owners.
Their communities belonged to their grandfathers . . . ever since Bolivar founded the country!

Conversation with
mestizo landlord.

In Bolivia, however, there has been a "real revolution," in the sense of a complex of economic, political, and other social upheavals that have, since 1952, irreversibly changed the traditional distribution of wealth and power, especially in some rural areas, and brought a new sense of awareness and participation to peasants who had previously been disfranchised, on the fringes of the money economy and other national systems.

Viracocha, like others in the AUFS film series on Bolivia, is set in a remote and productive ecological zone where Quechua, Aymara, and mestizo populations live and work in close proximity to each other, unwitting partners in a symbiotic system that has not previously been studied in detail, and that reflects the dynamics of revolution in a microcosm that might at first appear to be isolated and unchanging. It is important for viewers to recognize, however, that the realities vividly and accurately reported from this small region serve as illustrative case-studies, but should not be taken as in any sense "representative" of contemporary Bolivia.

The location is west central Bolivia, high on the eastern slope of the Andes; clouds often settle over the bluffs like cold mist, and frost is commonplace at night, although the nearby valleys are much more temperate. Ayata, a minor provincial capital (analogous to a county seat in the United States), is a decaying old town. The graded road that connects it with La Paz ends there, and no more than two trucks carrying freight and passengers make the arduous 16-hour trip each week. In other directions, only people and pack animals can travel the trails that join Ayata with the relatively isolated haciendas and villages that surround it. Three kilometers uphill is the village of Vitocota, where several families of Aymara-speaking Indians live, independent but closely linked with the Spanish-speaking mestizos of Ayata.

Most North Americans would marvel at the "isolation" and "conservatism" of these people, but both isolation and conservatism are highly relative, and two of the recurrent themes in this series of films are the ways in which local situations reflect global human processes, and the effects of modernization on the workaday lives of individuals in unfamiliar rural societies.

"The Revolution" and Its Aftermath

Although Bolivian history has been marked by nearly 200 instances of violent change in the head of state during a mere 150 years of independence, there is never any doubt that mention of "the Revolution" in daily conversation refers to the changes introduced by the Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (MNR). That party came to power after brief but bloody fighting in 1952, as a loose coalition representing a wide range of interests, united only in their opposition to the incumbent conservative coalition of landowners, businessmen, and the military.

Revolution has less to do with skirmishes, however, than with changes in economic, political, and other social institutions. Soon after acceding to power, MNR leaders embarked on a sweeping program of land reform, nationalization of the mines, and universal suffrage, while cadres spread the word to the countryside and undertook the politicization of the population for the first time.

The peasant majority did not take part in the uprising, but their support was energetically sought once the small band of miners, factory workers, and intellectuals had toppled the old regime. Indian-speakers who had previously been ignored by politicians became a focus of active programs of consciousness-raising, and a variety of popular and populist programs secured broad-based support for the MNR over many years. Even today, although the MNR no longer dominates the government, many of the changes it introduced seem irreversible.

One of the cornerstones of "the Revolution" was land reform—a national program aimed at expropriating the large quasi-feudal estates that had dominated rural Bolivia since colonial times, and reapportioning land so that former tenants became small-scale independent farmers. The Agricultural Census of 1950 showed that some 90 per cent of agricultural land was held by fewer than 5 per cent of the landowners; in a country where more than half the labor force were farmers, this meant that most were tenants working on large farms owned by a few landlords. Mechanization was minimal; large tracts of land lay untilled; and a strictly hierarchical social system, often without wage labor, predominated in the densely populated areas.

Although there was considerable local variation in details, the general pattern was for landlords to be aloof and paternalistic, offering tenant farmers little more than the right to cultivate a small plot of land in return for their labor on the hacienda. Often an absentee landlord left his farm under the management of a *mayordomo* (administrator) and only visited his properties on special occasions. Tenants were usually bound to the land, not just by debt bondage but sometimes as part of the realty, meaning that they could legally be bought and sold with the land.

The autonomy and pride enjoyed by the farmers of Vitocota contrast markedly with the dependent and deferent serf-like status of peons on haciendas before the revolution. As members of a "free community," not only do they have their own lands, and earn wages when they work for others, but they feel free to decline to work for a mestizo, even a magistrate, and they savor the fact that the old system of quasi-serfdom (epitomized in "*Yanasi* every Monday...," the compulsory weekly assembly at which peons were issued their work assignments) is extinct.

Political changes were closely associated with major economic shifts. Land expropriated from the large-scale landlords (*hacendados*) was given to the peasants. "Peasant leagues" (*sindicatos*) were organized, in part to facilitate land-claims, but also to support the MNR. The discredited armed forces were effectively disbanded and their weapons were distributed to the *sindicatos*. The major tin mines were nationalized and, although they cost more to operate than they earned, the symbolic value of that act was immensely important.

Galloping inflation, multiple exchange rates, and haphazard experiments in agricultural and other development led to the creation of a new and different concentration of wealth and power, despite the fact that some innovative institutions looked briefly like dramatic experiments in egalitarian government. *Cogobierno* (literally: co-government) required that each cabinet minister work closely with his counterpart representative from labor, but the practice was abandoned as unworkable in the mid-1950s. In the late 1960s, an *asemblea popular* (popular assembly) formed a chaotic and short-lived grassroots substitute for the Congress, which had been dissolved. Universal suffrage expanded the electorate enormously, by rescinding the restrictions based on literacy and property that had excluded more than 90 per cent of the adult population. Organizations representing various labor groups—including peasant farmers—have become vocal, and occasionally effective, lobbies.

These many innovations seem to reflect a revolutionary way of looking at the nation-state as a social system, and at the roles of

Film Dialogue

Q: *And these that are working here?*

These men working are friends of mine.
I pay them by the day . . .
. . . daily wage of 20 . . . 25 cents.
I also give those that work for me some simple food . . .
. . . also a little alcohol!

Q: *But they also have their own lands.*

They have their lands.
This José and his wife live in the community of Quishuarani.
The other man lives on the ex-estate of Lakayani.
The other woman is the wife of the bricklayer. I needed her today and he loaned her to me . . .
. . . to plant the potatoes.
Conversation with mestizo landlord

individuals and constituencies within it. In that sense, it seems doubtful that even the most conservative administration will ever be able to overcome the heady sense of liberation that many Bolivian peasants enjoy, and to restore the old order that prevailed to the middle of the twentieth century.

At the same time, there is another sense in which continuity is at least as important as change. The symbolic importance of universal suffrage is far greater than its practical utility as a means of affecting who will make what major decisions; fraudulent manipulation of election results is commonplace, as is ruthless suppression of opposition political groups. The strong tradition of centralized administration persists, to the degree that even today it is convenient to speak of what some political scientists call "internal colonialism."

In internal colonialism, the dependencies are outlying areas within the same nation; but they subsidize the concentration of wealth and power enjoyed by people in the capital in a manner analogous to that in international colonial relations. Similarly, the interests and priorities of the dominant group are usually very different from those of the scattered dependent populations. What this means in specific terms is that local officials are usually appointed by higher officials, rather than being elected by their constituents; decisions made at any level can be countermanded with impunity by anyone at a higher level; informal channels of communication can have much more impact than the bureaucratic apparatus as it is portrayed in formal tables of organization; the capital,* like a foreign imperial power, drains off the wealth of its dependencies; and so forth.

Inter-Ethnic Relations

Another aspect of the Bolivian situation that relates to internal colonialism is the diversity of the population. Much of what has been written about Latin America emphasizes racial differences, and the major components of the population are usually identified as Indian, white, black, and mestizo. There is usually a clear implication that the first three are racial groups and the last refers to the large and growing mass of Indian-white "mixed bloods." At a gross level of cultural historical interpretation, there is some limited validity to such a characterization, but there is little to be gained, and much to be lost by applying the biological concept of race to contemporary social situations, in Bolivia or elsewhere.

Although differences among ethnic categories are usually phrased in racial terms by local people, the features that distinguish membership are not physical or genetic, but rather they are sociocultural. In a context where the same individual may be labeled "Indian" or "mestizo," depending on occupation, skill in speaking Spanish, personal wealth, clothing, or other such characteristics, it is apparent that ethnic classification is not biological but social.

*Bolivia is unusual in having two capital cities. Although Sucre is officially the capital, La Paz is the de facto seat of the legislative and executive branches of the government. It is also the largest city and the commercial and industrial center of the country.

Elderly Aymara woman shelling corn.

The fact that various ethnic categories (or "social races") are identified by local people, and are sometimes identifiable by others, could easily lead to an emphasis on cultural pluralism that would be misleading. In describing and analyzing plural societies, many observers have emphasized the mutual exclusiveness of the component economic, political, and other systems; such popular concepts as "dual economy," "folk versus urban sectors," "great and little tradition," and so forth, imply a degree of isolation that between or among ethnic groups is rarely encountered in the real world.

A more fruitful way of looking at any plural society is to focus less on institutions that are distinctive among groups and more on those that are shared by the different groups. In such interface systems, it is often clear that both the quality and quantity of participation by members of the respective groups is different, and many contrasting attitudes and values are shown in sharp relief.

There are certainly many respects in which the mestizo town of Ayata and the Aymara village of Vitocota can be fruitfully discussed as separate communities; it is also obvious that many aspects of workaday life occur and have meaning not so much "within" either community as in an overarching social system that involves interaction among the members of both communities, and often also involves people from other communities as well.

One such system is that of the market, where different people bring different goods and services that others want. This is one of the few areas of the world where barter persists—not because cash is unknown, but because itinerant vendors travel from town to town, according to a weekly cycle in which "the market" is not so much a place as an event, occurring on a designated day in various communities. The maize that is traded for dried fish in Ayata on Sunday, may well be traded for coca in Chuma on Monday, and so forth.

Another interface institution where Indians and mestizos play different and complementary roles is the Catholic Church. Indians celebrate a fiesta in a traditional manner, dancing to music that would have been familiar in pre-Columbian times; but the fiesta commemorates a Catholic saint, and, in the absence of a priest, a mestizo sexton charges for performing some rituals in Latin, without which the Indians feel their fiesta would not be effective. When a drunken mestizo insists on dancing with some Indians, the incongruity is awkward for everyone but him.

Mestizos in Ayata sometimes ask Indians to work for them, but—since the revolution—Indians sometimes decline. While overseeing the planting of potatoes, a townsman carries a machete which has no other use in this context than as a status symbol; he jokes about how a little coca, tea, and alcohol will "fatten up" the day laborers, although he takes pains to identify

Film Dialogue

No . . . they're not dedicated. They'd rather go to La Paz and be laborers. This harms their work. And, more than anything else, it's their drinking.

Q: *Isn't it possible for these to elevate themselves?*

Of course! There are many possibilities! In life, 'Where there's a will, there's a way'!

Mestizo speaking about Aymara

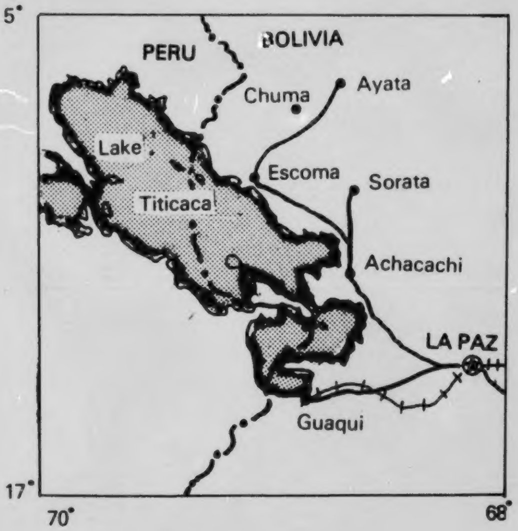
them as "friends." Ambivalence can be discerned on both sides—some Indians are willing to work for Ayatans occasionally, although they consider them inept and lazy; mestizos in Ayata, in turn, poke fun at the backwardness and drunkenness of Indians, and yet depend on them for important skills.

Within the town, mestizos have higher social rank than Indians. A self-appointed assistant to the sexton harangues Indians whom he stage-manages during a fiesta; Indians who had already given a third of their harvest to one landlord seem passively to accept the demand that they deliver another fourth of it to another mestizo who had only recently acquired a part-interest in the hacienda on which they live and work.*

But it would be a mistake to interpret such behavior as indicating that Indians are unquestioningly submissive to the domination of mestizos. While earning wages in a mestizo's field, Indians work at a desultory pace compared with what they do in their own fields; others defy even the magistrate when he asks for their help; and the Indians revel that the days of involuntary servitude are over. There is a special irony in the way Vitocotans poke fun at the Ayatans; they use the same kind of stereotypic judgments about backwardness, laziness, drunkenness, and similar characteristics that are commonly used by mestizos in reference to Indians. They are not just gloating over victory in a classic class struggle; they show a twinge of pity for the mestizos of Ayata but also openly admire the more industrious, liberal, and progressive mestizos in nearby Chuma.

Physical and Cultural Ecology

The communities illustrated in these films are in an unusual ecological zone, identified in Bolivia as *cabecera de valle* (head of valley). They stand high on the eastern slope of the Andes, where springs and glacial streams have cut deep valleys through the rock, as they rush to the low Amazonian basin plain that begins just east of the nearby escarpment. The elevation (about 4,000 meters, or 12,500 feet) is about the same as that of Lake Titicaca and the altiplano (the densely populated high plateau that lies between the cordilleras of the Andes), but there is more moisture on the eastern slopes, and the steep hillsides offer special advantages that might easily be overlooked. Because altitude is a critical factor in terms of temperature, garden plots within a few hundred meters of each other can support markedly different crops. In such a situation, peasants usually diversify their farming by using several small plots in different areas to produce different foods, or even to produce the same foods at different times. This approach not only allows for variety but also serves as a kind of insurance, since agriculture is one of the most risky enterprises under even the best conditions.



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*It is interesting that an "outsider" was called in to lend credibility (or perhaps even authority) to this demand. The film crew's interpreter was hailed on the street and charged with explaining to the Quechua-speaking tenants, not only the new landlord's claim to a portion of the harvest but also the original landlord's endorsement of it. Thinly veiled threats by both landlords cause concern on the part of the Indians.

Vitocota is situated high on the side of an immense v-shaped valley.

Archaeological evidence indicates that the Incas were using this kind of dispersed farming in pre-Columbian times, and the advantage of such micro-ecological diversity has been aptly characterized as comparable to a "vertical archipelago." Even a mestizo townsman vaguely recognizes the pattern although he does not understand it. He deplores the fact that Indians have so many scattered holdings, but doesn't realize that some are probably no more than a few meters square; he complains that they leave plots fallow, without recognizing that this is part of a sophisticated, eight-year cycle of crop rotation.

FILM
LINK

The outspoken scorn of some Indians for mestizos and the importance of the revolutionary reordering of the social system are even more dramatically portrayed in some of the other films in this series (especially, *The Children Know*), and yet some observers may still think that the Indians are being constantly exploited by the mestizos. The wage of four or five pesos (about US$.20 or .25) per day seems less small when one recognizes that there are few other ways in which Indians can earn any of the cash they need for those few necessities they do not produce, such as matches, salt, alcohol, or sugar. Similarly, those Quechua Indians who owe part of their harvest to absentee landlords are tenant farmers who also grow crops for themselves on land to which they have no title and on which they pay no taxes. Although one can easily suggest changes that might improve the lot of many of the people involved, it is important to recognize that even those who may seem to be "exploited" enjoy some benefits within what is basically a symbiotic socioeconomic system. It is fruitful to look at inter-ethnic relations in ecological terms, just as it is with land tenure and farming practices.

FILM
LINK

There are other aspects of Aymara culture that lend themselves to easy misinterpretation by superficial observers. A student who has read a little about Andean life may be justifiedly proud if he or she recognizes that the distended cheeks of many of the people in the film are caused by cuds of coca rather than by sickness. But the same student may go far astray if he equates the habitual use of coca with poverty, drunkenness, or ill health that often characterize the same people. The traces of cocaine that are ingested tend to be energizing and invigorating rather than debilitating or hallucinogenic. Coca, as it is customarily chewed* in the Andes, plays much the same role as tea in modern England, or coffee in the United States.

Alcohol is another substance that plays important symbolic roles in the various cultures of Bolivia, and that looms large, not only in normal daily conversations but also in many social and economic activities. A little alcohol** is provided as part of the pay for day laborers in Ayata; it is served to symbolize agreements that tenants will deliver maize; in Vitocota, it is reckoned as an important measure of the success of a fiesta. Drunkenness is common in festive contexts, but alcohol is used to promote social solidarity far more often than it causes disruption. Even the gesture of spilling a little on the ground before drinking shows a link between alcohol and religion—the Quechua spokesman makes a subtle offering to Pachamama, the Earth-Mother, before he pledges his bond to the new landlord.

Inter-ethnic relations are rarely egalitarian, and certainly those portrayed in this film are not. However, the ways in which people perceive status differences are by no means uniform, nor even consistent. For example, the magistrate in Ayata still considers himself an important and powerful man, although Aymara-speaking peasants in Vitocota agree that he must learn that he can no longer count on their help. Rather than comply with unwelcome demands, Quechua tenant farmers claim never to have received them. A day laborer simply ignores the question rather than tell his employer that he will not come to sow maize on Thursday.

The very title of this film reflects the ambivalent and equivocal nature of inter-ethnic relations. Virtually all Bolivians, whether they speak Aymara, Quechua, or Spanish at home, know the story about Viracocha, the Creator, who was the source of all divine power. He taught mankind how to live properly, and then left the administration of his domain to other deities he had created. He promised to return in time of need, and then disappeared, walking west across the ocean. As the Inca story was recorded by Spanish soldiers and priests, Viracocha was fair-skinned and wore a beard. In fact, Spaniards were often greeted as "Viracocha." What kind of awe the sixteenth-century usage implied is difficult to comprehend—scholars are still debating whether the Incas attributed divinity to the conquistadors.

But in the contemporary setting under discussion here, selective use of the term "viracocha" can best be understood as a generalized honorific. The "viracochas" in modern Bolivia are not

Film Dialogue

These mestizos of Ayata are lazy . . . they spend their days lounging on street corners.

That's no way to get ahead . . . to progress you have to work.

On the other hand, the mestizos of Chuma are real workers . . .

Aymara speaking about mestizos.

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*The verb "to chew" is customarily used in English with reference to coca, although the appropriate action is more nearly "to suck" (as is also the case with so-called "chewing tobacco"). A cud (or quid) of leaves is held in the cheek for a few hours, occasionally freshened with a few more leaves or supplemented with a little bit of prepared limestone, which accelerates the release of alkaloids.

**Although it is identified in the film as "grain alcohol," virtually all of the alcohol drunk in Bolivia is distilled from sugar cane. Packed in large quadrangular pink cans, it is shipped from the eastern lowlands throughout the country; a few people drink it undiluted (178 proof), but most dilute it with an almost equal amount of water, and call it *aguardiente*.

thought to be reincarnations of any mythical hero or primordial god; however, they are men one does not want to slight.

Persistence and Change

When discussing a revolution, it is tempting to focus on drastic changes that have taken place. But even in a revolutionary context, many aspects of belief and behavior show remarkable persistence. This is vividly demonstrated when North Americans who are unfamiliar with Bolivia see *Viracocha* and are shocked by what they consider the poverty, submissiveness, and "backwardness" of the Aymara peasants, or the overbearing dominance of the mestizo townspeople. Those who compare the situation as filmed in 1973 with that before the revolution are struck by exactly the opposite characteristics! Change, like isolation, is a relative concept.

Another important consideration in assessing the impact of a revolution is the necessity of looking not only at forms but also at functions, since either can change without the other being altered. As a specific example, some of the *sindicatos* that were established to help Indian peasants become independent have themselves become exacting and restrictive, with elected officers acting much as the former landlords had done. By contrast, a few landlords who still deal with their former tenants do so in newly solicitous ways.

Revolutions can be weighed in many scales. One could emphasize progress and economic development. Another might look at social welfare and justice. Still another might try to assess quality of life. In each of these respects, the Bolivian revolution has benefited some and deprived others. Probably the same is true of significant changes in any sociocultural system. Since beliefs and behaviors are valued by individuals, there is no sure and painless way to change them.

BOLIVIA

2

Education

THE CHILDREN KNOW

by WILLIAM E. CARTER

The schoolteacher in Vitocota is a vital and respected figure in the Aymara community. Although he looks younger, he is about 45 years old and has been a teacher since the mid-1950s. He is married and has a daughter eight, a son six, and an infant son. His salary amounts to about $50 per month. This makes him a wealthy man in a region where few people have any regular cash income and day-labor yields from US$.15 to .25 for dawn to dusk effort. Moreover, his ability to read, write, and speak Spanish fluently gives him exceptional advantage in dealing with the government bureaucracy. Together, his literacy* and professional experience, along with a complex personality, put him in the role of intermediary between mestizo and Indian cultures. These demands often conflict and make it difficult to make casual judgments about his allegiances. Yet circumstances in the mestizo town of Ayata and the Aymara village of Vitocota frequently compel a man in such a key position to declare himself; if he will not choose the choice is thrust upon him. Is Hugo Indian or mestizo? To himself, to his Aymara community where he is resident, to the mestizo community?

Certain superficial evidence seems to support a predominantly mestizo identity. The schoolteacher is most comfortable with the Spanish language. He wears Western clothing instead of the homespun worn by most campesinos. He has a respectable government position and a salary. All these attributes place him among mestizos. On the other hand, he is careful always to express respect publicly for his students or their parents. (Sadly, this is not always the case with teachers of campesino children.) He is a full participant in Vitocota's Fiesta of Santiago,** joining one of the costumed dance groups as well as the informal celebrants. He also consumes respectable amounts of alcohol—not the dainty sips of the self-conscious drinker who wishes to separate himself from the rowdy drinking habits of his companions. On several occasions, he went to some trouble to display "Indianness" while among mestizos. Moreover, his defense of the Aymara, in response to criticism from a visiting physician (a mestizo) might seem perfunctory or weak to an outsider, but it was considerable in a society that accepts the doctor's prejudices as fact. His reticence is also explicable in view of his eagerness to have the schoolchildren examined and treated. He was reluctant to offend the doctor. Later, in the film, his delineation of the region's problems and his own frustrations was both passionate and remarkably insightful. (One must remember, too, that it is delivered on the corner of the plaza in Ayata to a North American film crew.)

It is this inconsistency which in the end is most significant and critical to understanding his inevitably complex role in Vitocota/

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*His important role in the community is shown in his drafting of the old man's will in "The Spirit Possession of Alejandro Mamani," film essay, *Faces of Change,* American Universities Field Staff, 1976.

**See Dwight B. Heath, "Viracocha," film essay, *Faces of Change,* American Universities Field Staff, 1976.

The Schoolteacher's wife and their youngest of three children.

Ayata society. He ignored Aymara language (he himself was a mediocre speaker) in his teaching, thus handicapping the students. He often chided them for their ragged clothes and dirty faces—a standard practice among educators of Indians. He stood up for Indian sobriety on one hand but made sarcastic comments about their affection for drink when they fled his call to attend Flag Day. He coached the children to avoid offending the mestizo guests on Flag Day but refereed a soccer game between the schools during which the mestizo children insulted the Indian children with impunity.

Unlike many rural schoolmasters, he was a devoted teacher. He hewed to his task every day from 9:00 A.M. to 3 P.M. and took interest in his students outside of class. He was obviously knowledgeable and, within the difficult context of rural education, he seemed a superior teacher. During Flag Day he did not fawn over the mestizo visitors and he delivered his speech in Aymara to the assembly. On balance, he seemed to manage a complex and even precarious role with integrity.

Vitocota primary school.

Traditional Learning

In an environment as socially and physically hostile as that faced by the Aymara, toughness is developed early. Children among the Aymara learn to perform adult roles at a time when, in more pampered societies, they would be looked upon as totally incapable of responsibility. They move from infancy into childhood and acquire a degree of accountability when they have their first haircut around the age of two. The event is highly ceremonialized, godparents are named, and a gift is given for each lock of hair shorn. In this way they accumulate their first capital and formally enter the productive world. Thereafter they are expected to contribute their share to the functioning of the household, and to emulate the good points of their godparents.

The extent to which children of this tender age are expected to make serious contributions to the family's well-being varies, of course, from case to case. But in general, from this point onward, children are expected to show deep respect for their elders, never to contradict them and strictly to obey orders.

Complete division of labor does not occur until adolescence. In their early years, both boys and girls spin, carry water, collect dung, wash dishes, sweep the houseyard, and peel potatoes and *ch'uñu*. In general, boys are given more freedom in late childhood, more formal schooling, and more opportunities to travel. In their closer and more frequent contacts with the outside world, they reflect what is normal adult male behavior. The main lessons that parents attempt to transmit to their children are that they be steady, reliable, obedient, and hardworking—all qualities highly esteemed in the adult world. Assigning tasks to the children, parents will give instructions one, or at the most two times; if children do not respond, they accuse them of stupidity.

Toys are scarce, but their scarcity does nothing to inhibit play. Children invent games that imitate adult behavior. Collecting pebbles of various sizes, they build household compounds and fields, filling them with other pebbles representing houses, animals, and even potatoes and *ch'uñu*. Although their own experience is usually limited to a small geographical area, their imagination is not: they may even be observed imitating airplanes, holding out their arms as wings, making motor sounds with their puckered lips, and running happily around their houseyards.

From the time they receive their first toys, children are taught the importance of private property, that no one should take possession of a person's own things, whether they be sheep, cows, donkeys, dogs, land, clothing, tools, toys, or food. Siblings rarely fight physically. They will yell at one another and take objects from one another. But parents, if around, quickly intercede, scold the children, remind the older sibling that he must care for the younger one and, if the children do not fall into line, threaten them with and carry out physical punishment.

Children of all ages are remarkably independent. As long as they fulfill the tasks demanded of them, they are free to play as they will, and even small youngsters may go many hundreds of yards distant from the house. Only if they wish to go to a neighbor's or friend's for play must they ask permission, but this rarely occurs since they usually prefer relative's houses. In Vitocota, household compounds usually contain three separate but close-knit nuclear family units. Children are often taught to distrust and fear strangers. If alone at home when some approach, they are to yell from a distance that no one is in the house, and to set the dogs on the unfortunate visitors. While herding, they must allow no one to come near.

The schoolteacher's daughter.

Within their own family, children feel protected and loved. From birth they are accustomed to the cold, the sun, the pain. They are derided for cowardliness and taught to be valiant. "You are a real person if you don't cry," say their parents, and they readily learn to bear pain and discomfort without complaint. If they persist in crying, they are threatened with the child-eating *cucu*, or boogeyman. This usually brings a quick end to their tears. The stoicism of the adult is instilled early in childhood.

Proper manners and speech are considered as important as diligent, responsible behavior. At mealtime, children must wait for all their elders to be fed first, beginning with the eldest male. Before the children are capable of making complete sentences, they are taught to advise their mothers of their need to defecate. Shame is a basic instructional technique.

Parents place a great premium on proper speech, but transmit it mainly through example and ridicule. Occasionally they will correct mispronunciation, but more commonly they will simply laugh at the error. The child learns by repeating what he hears and correcting himself to avoid such embarrassment. Children are constantly and insistently oriented toward an adult-centered society of which they are the least important members.

The seventh year marks a dividing line in the Aymara life cycle, the movement from early to middle childhood. In some communities, this is celebrated by complex ritual. Once children reach this age, they have the right to go alone into the fields to herd sheep and pigs. And, if they are male, their father can begin to set aside a small portion of the fields for their benefit. This custom, known as *satak'a*, gives the child his first chance, through his own efforts to increase his capital. The portion assigned to him may be no more than half a row at the edge of a field. But with the assignment he is given a bit of potato seed and allowed to sow it on his own. He is charged with watching over his mini-crop, protecting it from marauding animals, weeding it, and finally harvesting it. With the fruits of this harvest he is expected to purchase his own toys and clothing, save a portion as seed for next year's planting, and, if there is remaining surplus, convert it to cash savings.

Formal Education

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It is also around the age of seven that children are drawn into the school system of Bolivia. The first serious attempt to provide formal education for rural children was made only in the 1930s, and then on a pilot basis. Wide scale expansion of the rural educational system did not occur until after the great revolution of 1952. An educational reform was declared which had as its purpose the separation of urban from rural education, and the extension of the latter into the most recondite communities of Bolivia.

The school in Vitocota is a small one with one teacher and only about 30 pupils. It falls into the category of sectional schools; i.e.,

Inside the Vitocota school.

small schools located in peasant communities that offer only the first few (usually three) grades of primary instruction. For further education, the student must go to a "central" (*nucleo*) school in another community, where all six grades of primary are taught. The "central" to which Vitocota is attached is that of Huancanipampa, two miles across the valley. Both the Vitocota and the Huancanipampa schools are for peasant children only. There is a combined primary-secondary school for mestizo children in Ayata.

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For most of the last 25 years education for peasants has been handled separately from education for city and town dwellers. With the creation of the Ministry of Peasant Affairs following the 1952 revolution, all rural education came to depend on that ministry. Salaries and working conditions of rural teachers were kept inferior to those of urban teachers, and the curriculum was geared to teaching Spanish, reading, writing, arithmetic, and a few vocational skills. But peasants have been unhappy with that arrangement from the beginning and have demanded that their children be given the same education as children who live in towns and cities. Their sons, they claim, also want to be doctors.

FILM LINK

With the 1970s, a single educational system was established in Bolivia, but many vestiges of the old distinctions persist. Even where there has been concerted effort to eliminate them, the effort often fails because of Bolivia's social and cultural cleavages. Aymara is a language as distant from Spanish as Chinese is from English. Children go to school and find that all instruction is given in a tongue they know nothing about. They are serious, highly motivated, wanting to learn. And they memorize. The teacher writes the lessons on the board; they copy them into their notebook; they learn the materials by rote; and they pass the exam. From primary through secondary, the way in which they keep and decorate their notebooks constitutes an important basis for their final grade. But they have only mixed success in understanding what they memorize. When asked to translate a Spanish language phrase, sentence, or concept into Aymara, they are often incapable of doing so, even when it is a phrase they have just finished reciting.

Culture, Education, and National Purpose

From the standpoint of the Bolivian national government, the basic purpose of rural education is the Hispanization of the rural populace. In consideration of this purpose, the statistics on literacy and academic success are not encouraging. For individuals 15 years or older, illiteracy stands at 60 per cent nationally; 17 per cent in Bolivia's urban areas, and 85 per cent for the country's rural areas.* Jacques Gelinas estimates that 56 per cent of all rural children of school age (6-14) either do not have access to or do not attend a school. Of those who do enter the system, only 8 per cent finish the fourth grade, and only 2 per cent finish the sixth grade, i.e., complete primary school.

True bilingual education, in which the student will learn the basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic in his own language, and then study Spanish as a second language, offers one possible solution. It has been resisted by the Bolivian government, whose predominant interest is in Hispanizing the entire population, but there are encouraging signs that it may be tried in the future.

In spite of the repeated failure of rural schools, Aymara parents place great faith in the educational process. They realize that literacy in Spanish and a knowledge of arithmetic are powerful tools which have been used, over the centuries, by the dominant minority of Bolivia to keep the Indians in their place. As a result, they make great sacrifices for the schooling of their children. Many rural schools have been built entirely with labor and contributions from the community,** and rural teachers have often received part or all of their salary directly from impoverished peasants. Today practically all teachers are paid by the government, but the basic construction and improvement of schoolhouses often remains in the hands of concerned parents.

Bursts of aid from the United States have occasionally filtered into communities like Vitocota. Some Alliance for Progress materials reached the Vitocota school, and initially were used. By the time the filmmakers reached the community, however, they were stored under a bench in the schoolteacher's house, and were dusty from lack of use. Whether it was true or not, the peasants were convinced that they could not afford the transportation costs so as to continue to receive Food for Peace shipments. As a result, the school breakfast and lunch programs had been discontinued. It is characteristic of the distrust separating different elements of Bolivian provincial society that the boys filmed after playing soccer in Vitocota were convinced that food continued to arrive at the nucleo but was not being passed on to the children.

Film Dialogue

It says, "The important foods are listed in four groups."

This word, "food," for example. . .

Listen, children!

The important foods are listed in four groups.

Come on . . . who can translate this into Aymara?

Come on . . .
How do you say this . . . in Aymara?

Think carefully. . . .

Schoolteacher

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*Gelinas, Jacques, 1974, El Campesino Boliviano y el Sistema Educacional. Santiago, Chile: Centro de Investigacion y Desarrollo de la Educacion (CIDE). Tesis de grado para optar el Titula de Magister (M.A.) en Educacion. Universidad Catolica de Chile, Escuela de Educacion,

FILM LINK

**The filmmakers promised new benches to the Vitocota school in appreciation of the cooperation given by the community. The problems they encountered in delivering on the promise form a saga suggestive of the kinds of problems dedicated teachers in rural Bolivia repeatedly face. Three separate contracts were let with a carpenter in La Paz for 20 double desks and benches. Each cost more than the preceding one. In the week preceding the filmmakers' departure from Viticota, the benches still had not been completed, even though more than ample time had elapsed since letting the first contract. One of the film crew's best Vitocotan

Flag Day: Campesino-Mestizo Interaction

Patriotic ritual is common in schools such as that of Vitocota, and one suspects that the teacher, knowing that the film crew was in his community, made a special effort so that Flag Day would offer evidence of his community's (and his) patriotism. Ordinarily this day is a minor holiday, and in many schools is totally ignored despite urgings from the Education Ministry that proper observances be held.

When making his plans for the celebration in Vitocota, the teacher decided that it would be a good idea to celebrate jointly with the mestizo children from Ayata. In many parts of highland Bolivia this sort of cooperation across class and ethnic lines is common practice. Not so in Vitocota. In a conversation on the soccer field before the ceremony, the teacher confers with three other adults. It is mentioned that this joint ceremony is a first, that the Ayatans have never before come to Vitocota for such a ceremony.

Vitocotans and Ayatans maintain a long-standing symbiotic relationship, but it is a troubled one. Mestizos in towns like Ayata tend to be resentful and fearful of the growing power enjoyed by Indians in surrounding communities like Vitocota.

While the categories of mestizo and Indian have racial implications in Bolivia, they are not really based on race. Some mestizos are more racially "Indian" than some Indians. What differentiates the two groups is language, occupation, culture, and style of living. One group is a defensive, dominant minority, and the other feels that it has been the long suffering victim of exploitation. Antagonisms are common and frequent. The comments of the filmmaker in describing the situation in the Vitocota schoolyard are illustrative:

> The children from Ayata were very much more at ease than the children from Vitocota. The children from Ayata dug down into little knapsacks and produced bottles of pop and snacks which they began to consume eagerly. They also played soccer with the two soccer balls they had brought. The children from Vitocota stood in a tightly knit group near the base of their flagpole and looked steadily at the children from Ayata. The children from Vitocota made no move to join the children from Ayata; neither did the children from Ayata invite any sort of play between the two groups.

All patriotic celebrations are occasions for speechmaking. Most of the time the speeches are vacuous. Developments set into motion by the 1952 revolution have given Bolivian Indians more hope and courage, however, so that speeches today often go far beyond formalities. That revolution brought on nationalization of Bolivia's largest mines, an agrarian reform which undercut the traditional power of the country's absentee landlords, election reform

friends, a man of considerable power in his community, then traveled to La Paz and personally supervised the completion of 15 unassembled benches. These were shipped by truck to Vitocota. The carpenter was to travel with the material and see that it was properly installed in the school. Upon receipt of the completed benches, the schoolteacher was then to give the carpenter a note which he would present to the film crew's translator (an urban Aymara) for final payment, once he returned to La Paz. Unfortunately, the translator spent the money before the carpenter got back to the city. On hearing this, the head of the film crew sent the "final" payment at least two more times, but apparently the carpenter never received it. While awaiting payment, friends of the carpenter's wife (a Vitocota resident) removed the benches to their homes.

The film crew finally got $100 to their Bolivian driver but the driver dropped from sight with some question as to whether he had paid the carpenter or not. Finally, the film crew was put in touch with a third urban Bolivian who successfully engineered the installation of 13 assembled benches and two unassembled ones. A North American scholar who visited Vitocota in summer 1975 confirmed that 15 benches were in place, though still unpainted and lacking some supporting rungs.

Such defaulting has been very painful to the filmmakers. They feel that they have been a disappointment to their Vitocotan friends, and a probable source of mockery from the mesitzos of Ayata. As in the case of the physician who "treats" the children in the film, the outsiders have not done things in a responsible manner. Reflecting on the situation, Hubert Smith says "it is no wonder the Aymara have been so suspicious."

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Film Dialogue

Long live Muñecas Province!

Long live Ayata town!

Long live Vitocota community!

Forward the campesinos!

Hail Boliva!

Children of Vitocota

which gave the vote to masses of people previously disenfranchised, and an educational reform which brought formal schooling to the most isolated and previously ignored parts of the country.

The speeches given during the Flag Day ceremonies shown in the film contain many little delights that reflect the varying impact of Bolivia's recent historical changes. When the mestizo male teacher from Ayata addresses his audience, he does so in Spanish, a language unintelligible to most of his adult audience. He stumbles when he first tries to refer to this audience. Finally he blurts out "*campe-sinos*," or "peasants." He refers to the Vitocota school as this "*escuelita*," or "little school," a diminutive that the filmmakers feel is not unintentional. Then he says "I, too, have been a rural schoolteacher," thus separating himself from the Vitocota teacher, and implying that he has risen above such things. Yet, as teacher in Ayata, he would be considered very much of a country bumpkin by teachers in provincial capitals, to say nothing of teachers from Bolivia's largest city and capital, La Paz. Finally, when everyone joins in the chorus of "vivas," he pointedly omits "*Adelante los campesinos*" ("forward peasants"). The Vitocota teacher, just as pointedly, includes it.

In Ayata's plaza, a mestizo girl and boy (left and right) are joined at "play" by an Indian boy (in hat), an uncommon occurrence.

In stark contrast to this speech is the one delivered at the end of the Flag Day celebration by an Aymara native of Vitocota. Unlike his fellow Aymara who follow either Catholicism, traditional beliefs, or syncretize the two, he is a convert to Lutheran belief, the Lutherans having had missions in this part of Bolivia for at least two generations. To become an Evangelical Protestant in an Aymara community means that one must give up many features of the culture, the most important of which is ritual drinking. The man making the speech has given up drinking, dancing, and attending fiestas and traditional rituals, all of which are important to an individual's integration within Aymara culture. As a person who has defied the old ways, he is less successful in getting a serious hearing from his neighbors than he would be were he not a convert. The speaker was in other ways, however, a model of "success." His home featured one of the few iron roofs in the community and he slept on an imitation Western-style bed (carved from wood) rather than the traditional sleeping platform. He dressed in rather new and well-kept Western-style clothing. Despite his religious stance on imbibing alcohol, he did not avoid its presence entirely. He was the sole vendor of beer in Vitocota.* He continued to live in Vitocota while operating his barbershop on the plaza in Ayata, where he was the *only* Indian entrepreneur.

Education and Health

In many ways, schools in communities such as Vitocota serve as broker institutions with the outside world. Information flows through them that would not flow through the ordinary school in the United States, and responsibilities are assumed that would not be assumed here. Every Aymara community has its diviners and curers. But Western medicine, when available, is usually provided only in mestizo towns or in the rural school itself.

Film Dialogue

Near Ayata we remain slaves of the mestizos.

But compared to the past we are like free and radiant doves.

Preserve this freedom . . . do not let the mestizos humiliate you.

My only criticism is your interest in fiestas.

You spend your money . . . money that is needed for children's clothes.

You are only brave and dignified in fiestas . . . when you're drunk.

When fiesta is over you are ready to suffer humiliation again.

With this I have finished, brothers.

Speech by Aymara Lutheran in Vitocota

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*It was a common sight to see his young son bringing a case of empties to the cargo truck each Saturday.

Aymara school children examined by a visiting physician.

When it was suggested that the children be examined by a visiting physician to Ayata, both parents and teacher probably looked on the arrangement as fitting the pattern of school. And so the children were examined, but badly. The physician's deficiencies are *not* typical of Bolivian medical care. Most Bolivian physicians are very well trained. For years a law has existed obliging any medical graduate to spend a year practicing in the provinces before becoming eligible for a license. Thus the idea of a visiting M.D. is accepted as normal.

So badly did this physician perform, however, that even the filmmakers questioned his authenticity. Quacks, of course, exist in all societies. It is unfortunate that, for those who see the movie but do not know Bolivia, this one may be perceived as representative of Bolivian medical practice. Not only is his quackery self-evident; so also is his prejudice against the Indians.

Education and Change

Vitocota, by having a school since 1938, must be classified as more progressive than the average Aymara community. Even free communities* (i.e., those which never were absorbed into great estates dominated by absentee landlords) rarely had schools in those early days. Yet changes come slowly. The film could have been made 20 years ago, and few things would have been different. Tradition lies like a dead hand on places such as Vitocota, yet it is a hand that reassures as much as it stifles.

There have been several attempts to transform rural education in the past 25 years, but these have had little impact on schools such as that of Vitocota. After a period during which rural and urban education were handled separately and under different ministries, they have been brought together again under a single Ministry of Education. In spite of many good intentions, no real

Film Dialogue

Doctor: *This creature can't be cured here. His father must take him to La Paz . . . it would be enough if they stayed there two days.*

Schoolteacher: *We must be frank, doctor . . . his father is completely poor. The trip costs $1.50 . . . he can't get $1.50.*

Doctor: *Why is this man so poor? He must be a drunk. Doesn't he work?*

Schoolteacher: *On the land . . . they have barely enough for the stomach.*

Doctor: *No, that's not how it is. The vast majority of peasants can hardly wait for the fiestas. They throw away all their money . . . and pledge their next tiny harvest for tins of alcohol.*

Schoolteacher: *Yes, that happens . . .*

Doctor: *Nobody controls their work. They work when they want and get drunk 20, 30, 15 days.*

Schoolteacher (later): *Now that boy's exceptional . . . His father's no drunk; he's poor. He can't buy a single pill. A drunk is someone who drinks every day. No one does in Vitocota . . . they are too busy in the fields. The doctor says they're drunks. That's a lie.*

*Vitocota is and always has been a free community. As such, it figures in the barely 25 per cent of Aymara communities that successfully resisted encroachment and usurpment by greedy landlords.

agricultural education program has ever been developed. Consequently, much of what is taught in the Vitocota school is irrelevant, especially for those children who will remain in the community. Those who will benefit most are the students who, upon completing their education, will leave.

Not even they, however, will be adequately prepared. To move ahead successfully in an urban situation today, one needs a high school education. The nearest high school to Vitocota is Escoma, along the shores of Lake Titicaca, hours away. Few make it there, perhaps less than 5 per cent of the very small number who graduate from grade school.

When one asks to what purpose Vitocotans seek education, one must therefore conclude that it is basically to escape. Yet not all migrate, and life in Vitocota goes on. For those who remain, life may not be a seamless whole, but it is a whole. Children respect and obey their parents; parents sacrifice themselves for their children. Hard work is admired, but interspersed with meaningful conversation and welcome humor. Vitocotans today are becoming increasingly aware of the power they have and are challenging old masters. They teach their children to respect others. They increasingly want respect for themselves.

Vitocota village.

BOLIVIA

3

Rural Economy

POTATO PLANTERS

by WILLIAM E. CARTER

Traditionally some 80 per cent of the Bolivian population has been engaged in agriculture--mostly in the Altiplano. For the most part, they have tilled the soil in essentially the same manner as they did under the rule of their pre-Inca forefathers. For many, the only change in agriculture for centuries was the imposition of the Spanish-colonial *latifundio* system. Throughout the colonial period and well into this century, farming involved dense population, cheap labor, low labor productivity, and depleted soils. Absentee landowners, assured of a supply of food as well as power and prestige, had little incentive to become involved in capital intensive, commercial agriculture.

In the twentieth century, three events have significantly shaped the present economic, social, and political status of Bolivia. The tin crisis following World War I devastated the national economy. Then the Chaco War (1932-1935), costly in terms of human life, material expenditure, and loss of part of Bolivia's territory was costlier still in provoking an internal social-political crisis both deep-rooted and prolonged. During the war, the Bolivian Indians for the first time fought side by side with mestizo and other Hispanic countrymen, and afterward they were no longer willing to accept second-class citizenship. Finally, the land reform following the 1952 Revolution completely cut the old social and economic bonds that had constrained the Indian population and gave them ownership of the soil they tilled. It also gave the Indians—called campesinos after 1952—mobility without losing the source of their livelihood. Thus, the agrarian reform's most significant result has not been more land to the tiller, more food and fiber for the campesinos, or more total agricultural production, but increased opportunities for the majority of the population.

The Agricultural Economy: Problems and Prospects

Many of Latin America's most pressing economic problems stem from rapid population growth and limited agricultural production. In Bolivia, other Andean countries, Central America, and Mexico, these problems have been compounded by the fact that most potential cropland is in underdeveloped, low-lying tropical areas and not available in areas where the population is concentrated.

In Bolivia it is nearly impossible to define any two physiographic areas of any size which have uniform characteristics. However, when evaluating the agricultural production of the country, it is convenient to speak about the Highlands (the Altiplano and the valleys over 8,000 feet above sea level) and the Lowlands (the Yungas, the semitropics, and the tropics lying east of the Andes).

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A highland village, Muñecas province.

Bolivia was the second country in Latin America to initiate a comprehensive agrarian reform. The plan was designed to alter the social, economic, and political structure of the country. A primary objective of the agrarian reform was to remold the semi-feudalistic society into a modern agricultural system. The first step was a sweeping program of redistribution of land. Redistribution could only go so far—a limited amount of tillable land in the Highlands was being divided among a seemingly unlimited number of people. Consequently, a comprehensive program of resettlement of people in the eastern Lowlands was initiated.

Colonization of Bolivia's tropical land has been seen as the answer to both the underproduction of agricultural products and the overpopulation of the Highland regions. It has been felt that by encouraging people to migrate to the Lowlands, the agricultural base could be expanded with total production increasing more quickly and economically than by increasing productivity in the Highlands.

Bolivia is not the only country making a concentrated effort to promote development and especially agriculture by resettling large numbers of people from densely to sparsely populated areas. However, Bolivia has many unique problems which few other countries have. Without a thorough understanding of these obstacles, it is difficult to put agriculture as practiced in villages like those in Muñecas province in proper perspective.

The Revolution of April 1952 sought to apply measures to radically transform the country's traditional structure. Chief among these were the nationalization of the large mining companies and land reform. Both were reinforced by trade union policy and programs for the diversification of the economy. While the changes have had repercussions on all aspects of Bolivian life, they were greatest in the mining sector, Bolivia's most important economic activity—where the government assumed major responsibility. And many would argue that the nearly complete dependence of the economy upon the mining sector has been a decisive factor impeding the country's general development.

Two additional factors can be cited as definite curtailments of economic development: (1) an inadequate educational base and (2) an inadequate internal transport system. The post-1952 agrarian reform paved the way for an expansion of both the educational* and transport systems. During the decade 1955-1965, more schools and roads were built than in any other decade, giving new hope for the poverty-stricken three-fourths of the population who were illiterate peasants. But the development of a transportation system encounters enormous problems in Bolivia. Obviously its terrain and configuration present difficulties. Of more significance is the concentration of its population in the Altiplano region. It produces for and must be supplied by distant internal and external markets. Exports must be transported hundreds of miles to ports

*See "The Children Know" for discussion of educational development.

along the Pacific Coast. Many consumer goods must be imported over the same mountainous terrain.

Given the mining industry's dominance in the economy, road and rail networks were originally built to service its needs. Even the two most recently completed railroads, from Santa Cruz to Brazil and Argentina, lead outward rather than tying the country together. The task of internal service falls to trucks using the inadequate road system.

Roads have long been and will continue to be an important factor in the development of Bolivia, especially in population dispersal. Whereas spontaneous settlement never branched out along the railroads, people are following the roads and opening up new areas of production in the colonized areas of Santa Cruz, the Chapare, and the Alto Beni. Indeed, if Bolivia is to become self-sustaining in foodstuffs and improve the diet of its population, it must move most of the produce by road transport.

Planting potatoes on a hillside plot.

Agriculture in Vitocota

Vitocota is located in Muñecas Province, an area inhabited by Aymara- and Quechua-speaking Indians and Spanish-speaking mestizos. Most of the land is approximately 12,000 feet above sea level and, on all the higher lands of the area, potato cultivation predominates in the mixed farming economy. The towns of Vitocota and Ayata, the nearby mestizo market town, are a rough 16-hour drive northwest from La Paz, the capital and largest city in Bolivia.

Film Dialogue

This boundary stone has been moved. The other is OK . . .

That one is old?
Yes, that's the original one.

This one looks OK.
Yes, it's on the line.

Anyway, this *one's not right . . .*

Maybe the children did this. They always mess around.

It's pointless . . . I can't plow straight anyway.

This was moved on purpose.

This was done to cause fights between neighbors!

So get a bigger rock. Bury it in the ground.

Plant it deep!

Campesinos discuss boundary marker.

Land Tenure in Vitocota

Land is held individually, and land rights are jealously guarded. Boundary markers are nothing more than small stones, sometimes submerged, sometimes lying lightly on the top of the soil. But individuals know their land like the backs of their hands. Stray markers are easily sighted, and corrections made as work proceeds in the fields. The crucial role of patriarchs like Alejandro is made clear in the film. Deferences are made to him during the breakfast. When the boundary comes into dispute, it is he who has the last word. Finally, in spite of his age, it is he who makes the lengthy circuit of the field tramping down the clods to assure a good planting, while the others break for their meal.

The importance of the closely knit extended family, dominated by an elder male, becomes apparent again during the meal break. Alejandro, his daughter, his daughter's husband, and other daughters of Alejandro form the central group. Off to the side is Alejandro's stepdaughter and husband, his daughter's mother-in-law, a landless servant (known as an *utawawa* or housebaby), and a young unidentified outsider.

A given individual's holdings are seldom, if ever, consolidated. Great value is attached to having land in as many ecological niches as possible, even though a given household may end up with as many as 50 or 100 plots, all of which are diminutive. Land pressure in Vitocota is not so great as on the Altiplano itself, and fields are relatively large, often three-fourths of an acre or more. Vitocota does, on the other hand, follow the pattern that the ethnohistorian, John Murra, refers to as the vertical archipelago. That is, land is held by individuals and households not only in various parts of the community, but also in far off semitropical areas low down in the valley.* The great advantages of such a system are access to products of many different ecozones and insurance against disaster caused by bad weather or the failure of a single crop.

The people of Vitocota seem to be neither very rich nor very poor by Aymara standards. They have the advantage of living near the head of a large, high valley with a population less dense than one finds near Lake Titicaca on the Bolivian Altiplano. They have the disadvantage of having to cope with a great deal of sloping land. When planting potatoes, they appear to handle this adequately. As they turn over the sod with the footplows, they leave strips of turf between the rows in which the potatoes are to be sown. When they plant *oca* on even more sloping land, however (in the film *Viracocha*), the furrows are closely spaced and straight up and down the field incline. (Since the root systems of potatoes and *oca* are similar, the difference in treatment shown in the two films is inexplicable.)

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*The filmmakers report that every Vitocotan household has, at a minimum, some maize land lower in the valley by the river.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Preparing a relatively flat piece of land for potato planting.

Crops and Diet

For the Aymara, as for many Andean peoples, potatoes serve as the staff of life. As many as three hundred varieties have been found in Aymara territory, and their various qualities are discussed at length throughout the year.

A single family may grow as many as 40 different kinds of potatoes, mixing several in a single field. All these varieties, however, they lump into one of two major categories, sweet (a "white" potato not to be confused with the U.S. "sweet potato") and bitter. The sweet, though producing larger and tastier tubers, are susceptible to frost. The bitter, impressively frost resistant, are more widely grown and are eaten principally in the form of *ch'unu*, potatoes preserved by alternately freezing and sun drying.

In their concern and esteem for potato varieties, the Aymara demonstrate a regard and an appreciation for an area that we ordinarily think is dull. Linguists tell us that the lexicon of a language reflects the major concern of its speakers. In the case of English as spoken in the United States, there is great lexical elaboration on things mechanical and industrial. Among the Eskimos, we find many terms for different types of snow. With the Aymara, the focus is on potatoes. This is suggested in the film during the long discussion comparing *p"urexa* with *papa lisa*. The former is a more prestigious tuber, though yielding less and involving greater risk than the latter. It is large, "sweet," and, when cooked, has a texture resembling that of a mashed potato. As much as these qualities may be esteemed, planters must have assurance of a sufficiently abundant harvest of other potato varieties before risking *p"urexa*. Because they are more frost resistant, more "bitter" than "sweet" varieties are always sown.

Film Dialogue

We bought "p"urexa" just as a change from "papa lisa."

This "yearly potato" is better than either of them.

"P"urexa" is just a good change from "papa lisa" and broadbeans.

"P"urexa" doesn't even need fertilizer . . .

Still, the "yearly potato" is best.
It's very good.

Conversation among
campesinos in Vitocota

FILM LINK

The key role of potatoes in the agricultural cycle may be seen in a number of ways. The large number of distinct, recognized varieties, and the ability to accumulate prestige by acquiring a wide sampling of these varieties are only two. Others include the use of manure to fertilize potatoes, but not other crops; the measurement of land in terms of the amount of potato seed needed to plant it; a system of omens indicating when to plant and the type of harvest one may expect; elaborate planting and harvest ritual for potatoes alone; and, in many communities, the naming of an official overseer (*camana*, or *camani*) of the potato fields by zonal or community headmen. Very few of these practices or beliefs are found in connection with other crops.

Other tubers, commonly grown by the Aymara are, like potatoes, native to the Andes. They include *oca*, a small cylindrical tuber having a slightly sweet taste and a tough rather than mealy texture; *ullucu*, a small round tuber referred to as *papa lisa* in the film, and *isaño*, a longish tuber somewhat resembling a parsnip in appearance. *Oca* can be freeze dried in the *ch'uño* manner: the resulting product is known as *q''aya*.

Grains play a secondary but important part in Aymara agriculture and in the diet. The most common grain crops are maize, *quinua*, barley, and wheat. Of these, *quinua* is the only one not familiar to North Americans or Europeans. Its grain, about the size of a mustard seed, is considered to be one of the most nutritious foods available to the Aymara. *Quinua*, which is often used in fertility ceremonies, yields from 32 to 64 times the amount planted, and so is looked upon as a symbol of abundance.

By almost any standards, the diet of the Aymara is limited and poor. In one of the few dietary surveys made of an Aymara community, 67 per cent of all food weight ingested was found to consist of potatoes in some form or other.* Percentages for other food categories were as follows: (1) cereals and legumes 13 per cent; (2) dairy products 9 per cent; (3) miscellaneous foodstuffs (including coca and an edible clay) 5 per cent; (4) meat and fish 4 per cent; (5) tubers other than potatoes 1 per cent; and (6) fats and oils 1 per cent. Such a diet is obviously low in protein. Animals are held as "walking" savings accounts. Even when slaughtered, the family will often sell and trade all the meat and content themselves with consuming only the edible intestines. Giving the intestines to the dog, as shown in the film on women, is a luxury relatively few families can afford. (In this case, the intestines may have gone bad before the dead lamb was discovered and butchered.)

The Agricultural Cycle

With the few exceptions of lower-lying lands benefitting from year-round irrigation, a single crop is as much as Vitocotans can expect from their efforts each year. In their "archipelago" maize lands, they may plant as early as July (the middle of winter south of the equator), to harvest in early November. In the higher potato-producing lands, however, planting is delayed until October or November, and harvest comes from February to June.

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*The data should be taken as suggestive only. Vitocotans probably enjoy a wider variety of foodstuffs because of their proximity to warm, well-watered valley areas. We know, for example, that in accordance with the archipelago model discussed in Dwight Heath's commentary on the Viracocha film, Vitocotans have maize-producing lands lower down in their valley.

The basic variations in an Aymara man's or woman's daily routine correspond to stages in the agricultural cycle: i.e., whether it is seed time, the period when crops are growing and maturing, harvest time, or the period of fallow rest. Seed and harvest seasons are, of course, the busiest. But the other periods are by no means times of rest. When agricultural chores are less demanding, the men and women of the household turn to crafts or go to market. Men make prolonged journeys into the more tropical zones of Bolivia to trade highland potatoes, cheese, and eggs, for fruit or additional maize.

The people of Vitocota prepare their fields for planting by hand. Using a wooden foot-plow of a type used in the Andes for centuries, the men break through the sun-hardened and dried surface. Women, as well as the other men in the work group, follow along with stone implements to pulverize the clods of earth and prepare rows for planting.

Because of the shortness of the growing season, the limited fertility of the soil, and the centuries that the land has been cultivated, weeds are a minor problem. One weeding is usually all that is needed. Hail, frost, freezing temperatures, and pests present much more serious threats. Since the only "effective" means of dealing with the weather is through magic and religion, ritual is given more attention, emphasis, and time than any other activity connected with the growing cycle.

Planting and harvesting potatoes or other crops in most cases involve the same closely knit group of people. The harvest particularly tends to be a time for gaiety and exuberance. Workers often take parallel rows, and try to outdo one another in speed, efficiency, and total amounts of tubers collected. Once the harvest is over, impoverished members of the community, such as the *utawawa*, are allowed in many areas to pore over the desolate fields as gleaners, or *talmiri*. Finally, children are sent out with the pigs and sheep so that any remaining tubers or bits of tubers may be rescued and put to some useful purpose.

After the harvest, grains are dried and stored. Potatoes are separated according to anticipated use. Those to be used fresh for seed, or for sale, are set aside in small storehouses. Those which will be used for *ch'uñu* or *tunta* are laid out on straw beds, a short distance from the house. From that moment on, the preparation and preservation of food, mainly *ch'uñu* and *tunta*, are in the hands of women.

CROP DIVINATION

Film Dialogue

Oh, ancestral spirits . . . make the potato grow well.

May next year be better than this year . . .

May the potato grow . . . enough to weight us down!

I was once weighted down with potatoes . . .

I fell down a hill . . . no one could stop me rolling.

Forefathers in the mountain peaks, we bury coca leaves . . .

Mother earth, a good harvest . . . nothing but huge potatoes!

Campesinos in Vitocota.

Crop divination (documented in the film *Magic and Catholicism*) goes much further than the simple reading of natural signs. It is an integral part of the planting of one's first potato field each year, and involves all those contributing to the planting process. The filmmakers found that, in Vitocota, the planters were obviously concerned that they finish planting before the Fiesta of the Nativity, September 8. A virgin saint's day is lucky because the day, like a virgin, has never grown anything before and is therefore especially fertile. On the other hand, a martyred saint's day has blood on it and is unlucky. The film was shot on Tuesday, September 4. A waxing (growing) moon was said to be lucky for planting because it would mean growing plants. The planters, the filmmakers found, were anxious to finish before the moon became full (i.e., stopped growing). Hence the discussion about the phases of the moon.

Other planting rites shown in the film center around the use of coca leaves for the dual purpose of divination and offering. The household head passes the coca to each male, and each selects three more or less perfect leaves (i.e., with no holes, folds, or irregularities). Each then returns his little fan of leaves to the household head who carefully buries them with appropriate prayers.

Only men conduct such ritual, although both sexes actively participate. For protecting the potato fields, much, though by no means all, of the ritual activity is left in the hands of the *camana*. Other protective and fertility rituals aimed at specific, family-held plots of land, are conducted by male leaders of nuclear and extended families.

As the growing season progresses, prayers are offered to secure an abundant harvest. Sample tubers may be tapped with a quince with the supplication: "May these tubers grow to the size of this quince." Or a request may be lifted to the spirits that tubers from neighboring fields come to one's own. Finally, as harvest reaches its end, the blood of a sacrificed sheep may be tossed as a libation over the bed of tubers being processed into *ch'uñu*. Supplications will be made to the spirit of the house, the *pachamama* or spirit of the earth, and various mountain spirits, to the end that everything turn out well. The best tubers will be collected, placed in a small carrying cloth, and stored in the rafters of the kitchen to insure an abundant harvest the following year.

Food Preparation and Storage

Fresh *ch'uñu* (*lojota*) is a luxury of the harvest season, seldom available at any other time of the year. For its manufacture, women take some of the largest, firmest, and smoothest of the "bitter" tubers, lay them carefully on a bed of straw late on a cold afternoon, let them freeze hard that night, and retrieve them the next morning before the sun's rays thaw them out. The process produces a tuber that is clear white, less dehydrated than *ch'uñu* and of a firm consistency halfway between the mushiness of fresh, steamed potato, and the toughness of *ch'uñu*.

Ch'uñu, when properly processed, can be kept indefinitely. The processing is not difficult. "Bitter" tubers are spread over a dried grass bed and allowed to freeze at night and thaw during the day over a two to three week period. When they turn soft to the touch and exude juices and bubbles, the women of the house or her daughters slough off the soft outer layer of each tuber with bare feet. Young girls quickly become expert in the operation, grabbing the tubers between their big and second toe and removing all the loose, watery material until a solid, dehydrated core remains. This they allow to dry in the sun, winnow by sifting through their hands on a windy day, and store in homespun bags.

Tunta requires considerably more attention. Usually, though not always, it too is made with tubers of the "bitter" varieties. Most housewives select the largest of the tubers, for *tunta* is considered a delicacy. Taking these prize potatoes in late afternoon to a bed of dried grass, they lay them out, taking care that none touches the other and, if possible, that there be at least a few inches between one tuber and the next. To insure that they freeze well, the tubers are sprinkled with water. The following dawn, they are tested. If one night is insufficient to freeze them properly, the tubers are bagged and carried to a cold, dark storage bin where the rays of the sun will not penetrate. In late afternoon they are again spread on straw, and the following morning retrieved. Only after the third or fourth night, when the tubers sound like stones when rolled together, are they considered ready for the next step: prolonged submergence under water.

The best *tunta* is that made with the straw bed method. A bed of dried bunch grass is carefully formed on top of a gently flowing stream of water. Lacking such a stream, a lagoon may be used, but the *tunta* from such water tends to be an ugly tan rather than the desired snow white, and has a strong odor and taste and a rough texture.

Once a dried grass bed has been carefully prepared, the frozen tubers are gently set in place, one by one, until the bed is entirely covered. The grass is pulled around the tubers making an enclosed, elliptical bundle. This is then weighted with a few stones so that neither tubers nor grass can be carried away by the current.

Film Dialogue

We've planted "white potato" . . . and "vicuna foot" . . .

. . . also "cow tongue" . . .and "pink potato" . . .

This one grows well, but it's mealy . . .

This wasn't good last year . . . It used to grow huge.

These are good seed . . ."black skin" and "pink potato" . . .

This is good to freeze-dry.

This cooks best in the skin. And this one, too.

This "black potato" is also good in its skin . . .

All these are good.
They're good.

Campesinos in Vitocota

Tunta processing of this type requires submergence under water for four to five weeks. When the tubers have turned pure white, some are disintegrating, and the bundle has a mild rather than strong odor, they are ready to be removed. They are taken out near sundown and spread on a dried grass bed so that, once again, they may be frozen by the night air. Special care is taken that none of the tubers touch, for if they do they only partially freeze. The next afternoon, after the strong winter sun has thoroughly thawed them, the tubers are stamped to remove the soft, outer shell. At this stage *tunta* tubers are much softer than *ch'uñu* and, if stamped in little piles like *ch'uñu*, can be easily shattered. The exercise of care insures a *tunta* supply that is smooth, snow white, delightfully perfumed and appetizingly mild flavored. It is something of which a housewife may be justifiably proud.

Potatoes in their various forms are one of the principal indices for marking status differences among the Aymara. Housewives are openly criticized if, when they entertain guests or participate in a family or community celebration, they serve only *ch'uñu* made from unprestigious "bitter" tubers. The fact that these guests are more often than not members of one's bilateral kindred makes for no exceptions. Such people can be more acrimonious in their comments than outsiders.

These facts notwithstanding, *ch'unu* constitutes the principal staple food. Poor people find that they must use all, or practically all their minimal amount of land for its production. Should they produce principally tubers belonging to the "sweet" series, they would be in a precarious position. A single freeze could reduce them to starvation. Hence the variety and amounts of "sweet" tubers in a family's possession are clear evidence of their social status, and their economic position (i.e., how much land they can put at risk). Those who are fortunate to hold seed to relatively rare, but highly prestigious varieties, are extremely reluctant to share the seed, and over the years poorer families try to accumulate such varieties from their wealthier relatives and neighbors.

Harvesting potatoes.

The continuous, dedicated activities of Aymara men, women, and children belie the myth many urban Bolivians propagate about their intrinsic laziness, improvidence, and lack of motivation. Feeding, clothing, and housing their family in a marginal natural environment are more than enough to keep parents busy from sunup to sundown. Over and above this, they remarkably accumulate small amounts of capital, provide leadership for their community, sponsor a number of important fiestas, and, increasingly, see to it that their children receive at least several years of formal education. They are seldom idle. Though their daily schedule varies from season to season, it generally keeps them going from six in the morning to ten or eleven at night.

An outside visitor to an Aymara community may find it difficult to accept such an appraisal. Etiquette demands that the visitor be

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given every necessary attention, even though this may mean neglecting one's proper business. Nor should one give any sign of being pressed for time, or of being inconvenienced.*

Each facet of the work load is shared as much as possible with unmarried children. In general, girls of any age and boys up to seven years of age are under the mother's command. Once boys have passed their seventh birthday, they are gradually guided into specifically male tasks unless the absence of female offspring obliges the family to assign them to sheep herding.

A clear sexual division of labor permeates agricultural tasks. The sexes are equally productive, although they rarely do the same things. A woman's knowledge of the full potential of her community's natural environment resources is as important as is that of her husband. Intense patterns of endogamy insure that she has this knowledge, and bilateral patterns of inheritance reinforce it.

The Aymara woman is far from being a passive individual, subservient to an overbearing husband. Married couples work in extremely close cooperation, spending far more hours and days together than do couples in contemporary Western society. Their contribution to the economic well being of the household, while not identical, is fairly equal in weight. If anything, the woman holds the upper hand. She has a central role in all agricultural activities, selecting the seed, preparing manure, determining how much seed will be sown (e.g., whether one or two potatoes will go into each hill), how much *ch'uñu* and *tunta* will be prepared, which potatoes will be sold, etc. The woman dominates most matters having to do with livestock. It is she who has the first and last say in the family's finances, controlling most sales and purchases, and guarding the family's coffers. With good reason a respected Aymara saying is that while women are the heart of a household, men are mere visitors.

The Economy: Labor

Most Aymara dislike handling their economic activities alone. Trained in a culture that has for centuries supported patterns of mutual aid they find that work is more enjoyable, and that certain tasks can be accomplished much more efficiently, if shared with others. The increasing fragmentation of holdings triggered by recent population increase has wrought havoc with the large work parties of 20 or more individuals that were common a generation ago. But work parties, on a smaller scale, persist. Based essentially on the traditions of exchange labor (*ayni*) and personalized wage labor (*mink'a*), they tend to reinforce already existing ties between bilateral kinsmen, ritual kin, and neighbors.

Exchange labor (*ayni*) can be used to accomplish all sorts of tasks, though most commonly it is associated with either planting or harvest. With prodigious feats of memory, household heads

Aymara women.

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*The impressions of the filmmaker, Hubert Smith, illustrate this nicely. He agrees that the Aymara (and many other) Indians have been grossly and wrongly accused of "laziness." But he feels that the need to correct this prejudicial impression should not obscure the fact that, among the Aymara, conversation is an art and an important social mechanism. He is right. The Aymara, while they work hard and consistently, understand and fully appreciate the art of leisure.

keep scrupulous records of how much *ayni* they owe, and how much is owed to them. The close kin relationships existing among all but two of the work party seen in the film indicate that it has probably been recruited as *ayni* labor.*

To avoid accumulating a surfeit of reciprocal responsibilities, helpers are sometimes recruited on the basis of *mink'a* rather than *ayni*. Essentially a type of salaried labor, *mink'a* carries reimbursement in accord with the particular task at hand. Individuals over nine years of age are thought capable of giving a full day of work and are recompensed accordingly. If they prove to be slow workers, they are simply not invited back. *Mink'a* parties, unless they have been organized by a mestizo outsider, quickly develop a competitive spirit, particularly in harvesting. Men and women who outdo the owners of the field are openly lauded.

Of those individuals offering their services as *mink'a*, landless community members (*utawawa*) are among the most common. They often go from house to house, offering not only their own services but also those of their entire families. Such individuals provide a ready labor pool for seedtime and harvest during the agricultural cycle and for housebuilding, spinning, weaving, and herding year around. They often prefer to collect in commodities such as potatoes, *quinua*, barley, dung, eggs, cheese, and used clothing.

Three common myths about peasant peoples are confounded by the people of Vitocota. One is that peasants are lazy and lack ambition. The second is that peasant women are downtrodden and have no real voice in important economic decisions. The third is that peasant communities, and Andean peasant communities in particular, offer us good examples of "primitive communism."

An Aymara family group breaks for lunch in the field.

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*The two exceptions are an old man who is an *utawawa*, but attached to the household of the father-in-law of the woman who owns the land, and a young man who, unfortunately, remains unidentified.

Quechua day-laborers, working on land owned by an Ayata mestizo, break for lunch. Men and women in an Aymara *family* or *communal* work group would probably not eat separately.

The people of Vitocota are hard working and ambitious. Much of the capital they accumulate is spent on occasional sponsorship of religious fiestas and on other types of ritual behavior. For any given individual, however, such expenditures come only a few times in life, and are supremely important in demonstrating to their fellows that they care, and they are not miserly.

Women in Vitocota, their protests notwithstanding (cf. the film on *Andean Women*), occupy an unusually powerful place in the society. They are the backbone of most economic activity and hold the family's purse strings.

The concept of private ownership, even of that most strategic resource—the land—is firmly imbedded in the psyche of Vitocotans. If told that they should turn over their goods and lands to communal authority, they would be the first to rebel.

For the Vitocotans, as for the majority of the Aymara, success in the potato harvest is tantamount to success in life. A telling proverb of these people is that without potatoes they would be like loose threads on a loom, for "potatoes are what bind life together."

Change and Hopes for the Future

The many reforms of the 1950s brought new opportunities and problems to Vitocota, just as they did to all other rural communities in Bolivia. Because of Vitocota's isolation, agrarian reform was less intense here than elsewhere. A number of former landlords have kept title to at least part of their holdings. However, by and large, they have abandoned Ayata, their old center of power, and today live in La Paz. Each year they negotiate with leaders of local peasant unions (*sindicatos*) for the labor they need. Usually the agreement is to split the crop 50/50.

FILM LINK

Peasant unions were purposely created by the Reform government (MNR) to solidify the accomplishments of the 1952 revolution. The unions of the Vitocota-Ayata area have been less aggressive than many on the Altiplano or in valleys like Cochabamba. In large part, this has been a function of the isolation of the area.

Because road improvement accompanied the 1950 reforms, the Ayata-Vitocota area is more accessible today than it ever was. Even with this improved accessibility, however, few trucks service the area.* As a result, prices of manufactured goods are extremely high, and those given for farm products depressingly low.

The basic effect of improved roads is the ease with which disillusioned peasants and townspeople can leave the area today. Some hire out as salaried laborers for short periods of time in the Yungas, a canyon-like agricultural area near the city of La Paz. Others migrate directly and permanently to La Paz itself, where they compound the growing problem of under- and unemployment.

There seems no great hope for places like Vitocota in the future. The resource base allows for subsistence with a minimal surplus that can be traded or sold either in the Ayata or the La Paz marketplace. High transport costs keep such trade to a minimum, however. Without fertilizers and insecticides, both of which would have to be shipped in, all production remains stagnant. To make matters worse, in recent years new diseases have attacked oca and maize and reduced yields.

Such are the factors leading parents in communities like Vitocota to support the local school avidly. With small holdings, minimal production, and scandalously high costs of transportation for their products, peasants see little hope for their children, save escape. Schooling, they feel, will give the next generation freer and broader choices.

Both the Bolivian government and International Development Agencies seem to agree in principle with such an assessment. Resources are not being fed into places like Vitocota, for it is widely felt that they face too many impediments to development: great isolation, depleted soils, and a difficult climate. Attention is rather being focused on the promise of large-scale commercial agriculture in the rich and often virginal lands of Bolivia's eastern, tropical plains. Vitocotans are unlikely to benefit from such a focus. When they migrate, it tends to be to the city of La Paz. The frontier lands are too alien and too distant to provide any great attraction.

What remains, then, for the Vitocota area? Very probably more of the same into an indefinite future. It will continue to be a backwater, where some of Bolivia's more "exotic" customs are preserved, and where the economy will allow for few luxuries beyond subsistence. Yet the Third World is full of such backwaters. It would be unrealistic to expect that Bolivia could be an exception.

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*See "Observations on the Market in Ayata," p. 15.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE MARKET IN AYATA

By HUBERT SMITH

Late Friday night, from terminals near La Paz's wholesale district, two 3-ton Toyota trucks rumble down into the city's center, pick up the twisting road that will take them up and out of the city to the lip of the Altiplano, and begin the trip to Ayata. They are tightly packed with goods and, on top of and among the bundles, the passengers. Huddled under flapping tarpaulins they sway and lurch through the pitted streets of El Alto, the sprawling La Paz suburb that catches and holds city-seeking immigrants until they either stick and move further down the city's sloping sides or drift back to their farms. The government control station checks the drivers' papers, the passengers and the cargo. Finally, they begin a rapid traverse of the dusty gravel road that slips up and around the Northeastern shore of Lake Titicaca.

Achacachi, Carabuco, and finally Escoma...picking up passengers but losing few for they have not yet outrun the buses that ply this road. At Escoma they turn right into the foothills of the Cordillera Real of the Andes chain. The choking dust is behind them and they begin the slow climb from 12,000 feet through the valleys and around the switchbacks. Huallpacayo, Wilikaya, Mocomoco...during the dry season the rains are manageable and the roadbed stays intact. The top-heavy loads seem to swing over the edge of the narrow grade and the passengers stare at eternity. The final pass always has a dusting or mantle of snow. It is at 18,000 feet and Ayata is near. Sixteen to nineteen hours have passed since leaving La Paz. The cholas nurse their children and make ready to debark with the huge bundles of dried fish they have brought from the Lake to trade in the market. Others shift their loads of oranges, bananas, onions, and coca leaves.

The engines roar as the trucks brake their descent along the plunging valley road. The trucks stop briefly in Vitocota and discharge a few passengers. Three kilometers below, in the plaza of Ayata, the town residents are gathered. Their ears have been pricked since noon and they've sorted the engines' noise from the familiar valley sounds a half hour before they reach Vitocota. These trucks are their only true contact with the rest of Bolivia and the world.* They bring mail, loved ones, supplies, and gossip. During the rainy season, owing to a washout or some other special circumstances,** trucks may not arrive for weeks.

Hubert Smith, who earned his B.A. and M.A. degrees in Communications and English at the University of Michigan and Ohio State University, had extensive experience in public television and university film production before becoming an independent documentary-ethnographic filmmaker in 1969. He directed the six films on Bolivia in the AUFS series, the *Faces of Change*.

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*The only other outside news is one-way broadcasting from the commercial radio station in La Paz. There is a regular message service by this radio, but to reply one must journey to La Paz. Ayata does have a telegraph but messages rarely make it through. In extreme emergencies one may walk to the small tin mine beyond the high pass and use their short-wave radio. Such is the nature of communication for Ayata and the Indian communities that dot the valley.

**If the militant campesino militia in Achacachi has been upset by a government dictum, they may have to shut down the road to force a retraction in their favor.

People and animals arrive in Ayata.

The weary passengers slowly stretch their legs and stand, looking calmly at the small crowd below them. Messages and questions are exchanged. No one hurries to climb down...perhaps savoring the absence of noise and motion they move their bodies gently, handing children and other small bundles to their friends. Each truck's tailgate is eventually lifted and the big bundles thump or are lowered to the cobbles. Most of the goods are moved into the room that serves as terminal and locked up. The drivers and their families stroll to the small boarding house for a hot meal—later they will bed down in the terminal with a few of the traders. Market will begin at eight Sunday morning.*

*Markets every Sunday and only on Sundays.

At dawn the roads to Ayata are strung with shadowy shapes... men, women, children, horses, mules, pigs. They stream down the slopes from the higher Aymara communities and trudge up the steep trails from the Quechua villages lower down. Their animals are laden with homespun bags, bulging with shelled maize or potatoes. Some will be sold and some is harvest-share for a mestizo landlord. The women carry cobbed maize in their shawls (*awayus*), for maize is the medium of exchange in the Ayata market, with eggs, potatoes, and oca (another tuber) running poor seconds.

By 9 A.M. the market stalls are strung out on two sides of the plaza. The mestizo shopowners have rigged their muslin awnings and are selling flour, drinking alcohol (178 proof), candles, soap, kerosene, matches, salt, and sugar.

By the curb, the Indian entrepreneurs (almost every trader is a woman) or "cholas" have each seated themselves and their children behind a mound of their produce. Small dried fish are the most popular commodity—three cholas sit side by side each conducting her own enterprise. Next to them a bale of bananas has been torn open and a few bunches arranged for display. A little further down are a couple of women offering onions. There may be oranges and perhaps tomatoes, too.

At the corner of the plaza there is a change of "departments." Here are the nonedibles, led by the traders in coca. They reach into the bales and pull out handfuls of dried leaves. This staple is piled in *awayus* or held in aprons for transfer to a husband's shoulder bag (*chu"spa*).

Household goods are piled in little mounds—pans, scissors, needles, plastic combs, cheap sunglasses. Several older cholas deal in vegetable and chemical dyes. The colorful substances are spread like a field of flowers before them.

The most striking aspect of the market is the predominance of women, both traders and customers. Little knots of men stand within the plaza itself, chatting. Their wives walk the street, comparison-shopping, looking for the chola who is most generous. At each stand a knot of watchers carefully eyes the transactions. They try to choose the chola, and the moment...all factors are weighed to gain the smallest advantage.

When she makes her decision, she kneels before the chola and sets her maize-laden *awayu* next to her and covertly selects several cobs to fill her felt hat. The small cobs are placed in the bottom and larger ones on top—a ruse that doesn't always work. She waits patiently, worried the chola may pick her at the wrong moment, perhaps just after a quarrel with another customer. She attempts to avoid this by leaning forward and presenting her hat at "good" moments. If the mood shifts she may withdraw her hat, lean back on her heels and look away or start to converse with an onlooker.

Finally the chola accepts her hat and briskly sorts through the cobs. Discovering the small ones she may glance at the customer and ruefully juggle the tiny cobs for a moment. Then, having conveyed her scorn for this little subterfuge, she hands the hat back to a group of women shelling the cobs behind her. These women work for the chola in return for produce—it is a necessary task because shelled corn is lighter and more compact, it makes good packing for eggs taken in barter, and the market in La Paz deals with it only in this form.

The chola grabs a couple of handfuls of small fish, drops them in the hat and plops it back in front of the customer. The customer picks it up, moves the fish with her fingers, and shoves it back at the chola. "Give me more," she says. The chola may drop another half-dozen immediately or she may argue. "The cobs were small, I've already given you a lot! Do you think *we* get presents? Why don't you give *me* a gift, how about some custard apples

A *chola* resident of Ayata.

In bartering, goods are often measured by the hatful.

(*cherimoyas*)?" Eventually she will fling a few more fish into the hat in an obligatory finale to every transaction—the same is true with every commodity sold in bulk.

The customer, if she regards the transaction as favorable, may load up her hat again and trade for more fish. If not, she will carefully place the fish in her *awayu* and circulate a bit more before selecting another fish-trading chola. One would never think of moving directly to a competitor for such open betrayal is not lightly taken or forgotten. One is free to move about but circumspection is appreciated. (There are, however, favored customers (*caseras*). These women are regulars either as transactors or suppliers of a particular item.)

By noon the market is dying. Indian families munch on cold lunches of boiled maize and potatoes. Cholas rewrap their bales. A few men buy alcohol to fortify them for the long walk home—they engineer the purchase (perhaps the only one they will make that day) but turn unabashedly to their wives for the coins to pay. After the purchase is made they will just as gravely place the change in the outstretched hand of the family money-manager.

While the women have been trading, the men have been both gossiping and conducting business. Perhaps they have contracted for haulage with a mestizo townsman. They may have been recruited for day-labor or asked to help thatch the house of an Ayata resident. But their wives have made the important decisions, carefully allotting the family's meager resources in barter for desired goods.

The trucks depart at 3 o'clock Monday morning. They make the difficult climb to the top of the pass in the cool hours before dawn. On top they pause an hour to rest and let the engines cool. Sometimes an Indian teenager slips from the shadows and begs a ride to La Paz. Sometimes a worried parent approaches the driver seeking a son or daughter.

With the sun they are on their way, the traders to another market, the passengers to La Paz and intermediate points, the drivers thinking of the long trips that will fill their week before they again embark for Ayata. And, below in the town, the waking residents wait for the faint and foreign howl of the engine to be swallowed by the wind.

BOLIVIA

4

Women

ANDEAN WOMEN

by MARTHA JAMES HARDMAN

Warmipuniy taq yatiñapachisti-
chachast wisitakichiy

the translation of which may be:

It is the wife who knows all,
the husband is but a visitor.

The basic virtue of all Aymara is respect—respect for every human being. This virtue is inculcated in the children by precept, by proverbs, by admonition, and by correction for any slip. A lack of respect is seen either as treating another human like an animal or as acting like an animal oneself. The basic division in Aymara grammar is also between the human and the nonhuman. There is one set of pronouns for human, and one set for nonhuman. Only after distinguishing human/nonhuman is sex distinguished—and terms used for humans are *not* used for animals and vice versa. The presence of another human must always be acknowledged; children must greet elders and all others without fail; the adults always greet each other. The penalty for treating others as animals is withdrawal or silence on the part of the offended person. Outsiders frequently violate these codes and are met with the "taciturn" Aymara. Because the dominant culture perceives women as subservient, such breaches of social grace occur more frequently with Aymara women.

The Aymara woman is not without power or resources. She is not, within her culture, a subject person. She and her man do different things, but they are essential to each other, and, to live well, must form a cooperative and equal partnership, a fact known to both. In this decade when the new concern for women has been marked by the designation of International Women's Year, we would do well to look to other societies, like the Aymara, to see how a more equitable society could be run—rather than seeing them through our own culture's distorted lenses. The harshness of the Aymara environment and our ethnocentricity should not blind us to the uncommon respect for humanness in the Aymara social structure.

Since the time of the Conquest, various groups have tried to impose upon the Aymara their concepts, mainly Hispanic, of social organization, including the relationships between males and females. Assuming its own superiority, the conquering culture remained blind to the Aymara reality. A good deal of preaching, planning, and teaching about male/female role models has gone into persuading the Aymara to be more "like us."

It should not be surprising, therefore, that some of the verbalizations shown in the film conform remarkably well to Western notions.* The Aymara have had 400 years to learn and to pass on to their children what it is the "misti" (European man or woman) wishes to hear. Courtesy demands that one say what one's listener wishes to hear, but for most of the Aymara, these words are irrelevant.** As you watch the film, contrast the ideals the women express with their actual performance in routine activities.

Role, Status, and Power

Women are the primary producers in Aymara society through their control of agriculture, livestock, finances, and the household, although the labor of children and men is similarly essential to the family's general welfare. Men too have important roles in agriculture and have primary control of contact with outsiders, mainly Spanish-speaking people of basically Western culture, for the pattern of contact is determined by the outsiders. Men also are dominant in ceremonial roles, both political and religious. Yet women and men may substitute for each other in any of the roles when necessity demands, and the cultural focus is on complementarity and interdependence. When a woman gives birth, for example, her husband will take over all her responsibilities for a period, with or without help from relatives. It is generally acknowledged, however, that women are more competent at men's work than men are at women's; thus you are more likely to see a woman plowing than a man dropping the potato seed, and you are more likely to see a woman in a ceremonial position than a man bartering in the marketplace.

The division of labor as given by the participants in the film merits closer attention. The women begin by saying that they can do everything. They then enumerate: we cook; take food to plowers; select seed; plant potatoes, ocas, apillas, corn; spin; care for animals; weave; arrange the house; raise the children; bear children; break clods; fertilize; and, on occasion, work at trades. The man adds that the women also butcher.

The men, according to the women, get firewood; tend the cooking fire; bring logs; make thread; mend their pants; plow; spin yarn; weave; braid (ropes); play the flute; and help the women raise children, cook, weave, spin. The man adds that men work with the pick as well as the foot plow, and that they butcher.

Children, the women say, pasture pigs, sheep, llamas; help in the fields; get water and firewood; help spin, and help break clods. Assignment of such chores to children carries with it greater expectation of responsible implementation than most North Americans generally realize. Maria Marasa, who is only about eight years of age, is entrusted with a flock that represents approximately one-fifth of the family's wealth. Children, of course, also play (and court) in the fields and pastures. Like young people everywhere, they would like to have more money, for clothes, dances, fiestas, and frivolities.

FILM
LINK

Film Dialogue

I've washed you well . . . haven't I?
Now you're clean . . . like a little Indian should be.
OK . . . finished . . . now you're nice.
Aymara woman.

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*The organization of subject matter for writing an article on Aymara women is also typically Western. It is part of the Western perception of "mankind" that the norm is male, the female is derivative. It is part of our—and the producers'—cultural baggage. It is *not* the Aymara bias. It may even be necessary that material on women be presented separately for Western audiences, for all too often what women do in a general film remains invisible, especially if it contradicts prejudices.

**Some Aymara are aware of the incongruency between their own world view and that of the Western world. One incident from my own experience may illustrate: when selecting persons to work with the Aymara Language Materials Project at the University of Florida, an Aymara man explained to me that we would require a female Aymara speaker. Of the two Aymara co-authors of the materials, one is a woman and one is a man (Hardman, Yapita, Vasquez, et al., AYMAR AR YATIQANATAKI, 1974). Most other materials (missionary, Peace Corps, etc.) have erred partly because of a singular reliance on male informants. Aymara, however, would not be Aymara if women were excluded.

At the end of the enumeration, one old woman states that no one sits and does nothing, that each does what needs to be done as soon as the need is evident. This last statement is probably closest to the real Aymara cultural ideal: hard work, responsibility, and cooperation. Laziness is perhaps the worst sin—and the worst insult. Aymara are far more concerned with habits of industry and productivity than with what we would call sex roles.

The lists represent about the same division of labor as has been recorded in other Aymara communities.* The people in the film, however, omitted many details—obvious to them, but not to us. Both men and women weave, but not usually the same article; for example, women typically weave the *awayu*, the cloth used for carrying burdens on the back, while men typically weave the sacks used for carrying the harvest on pack animals. Women usually do the spinning, men the twisting—both operations, equally necessary, look identical to the untrained eye. Nursing infants are almost exclusively in the care of women, but as soon as they toddle and more so after weaning, older siblings and men spend more time caring for children. By age six or eight, if the family is not together, a young boy is likely to spend most of his time with his father, a young girl more time with her mother.

*See Carter, William E., *Aymara Communities and the Agrarian Reform*, University of Florida Press, Gainesville, 1967, p. 49ff.

It is significant that both men and women in the film omitted mention of those spheres which are under the predominant control of one sex or the other: the marketplace and family finances (women) and ceremonial positions (men). Instead, they focused on their interdependence, those aspects of their lives where they must work together in harmony and cooperation for the task to be accomplished.

Most of an Aymara woman's activities are carried on outdoors -- either in the fields, in the market, or in the courtyard of her home. Only sleeping is invariably indoors. Houses are solidly and practically built, without windows, which might encourage thieves or let in the cold. Virtually no attention is given to interior decoration. Some families have the cooking fire inside, others cook outdoors in a lean-to. In any case, family activity centers around the courtyard: people prefer to eat there and it is there that Aymara receive guests and perform most household tasks. The complex of buildings around the courtyard may include, in addition to sleeping quarters, corrals for the animals, shelter for the smaller animals, and storage for the harvest and for foodstuffs and seeds.

Aymara women hold the purse strings for the family. Care of the household includes the disposition of all goods, including food, as well as all money. Controlling who may eat what and how much is a powerful role in a society where food is highly valued, symbolically and otherwise, and where it may also be in short supply, particularly at certain seasons.

Communal pasture in Vitocota.

Most of an Aymara's waking hours are spent working in the fields. Wresting subsistence from the hard, harsh land requires constant cooperation between woman and man, with help from children and kin, real and fictive, as well as reliance on Aymara institutions such as _ayni_* and _mink'a_. These institutions reinforce community ties and obligations in addition to supplementing the family as labor units during peak periods of agricultural work.

*_ayni_, exchange labor; _mink'a_, personalized wage labor.

As corollary to an Aymara woman's primary control of the purse, she is the family trader. She sells the family produce and buys what the family needs. If a family grows commercial crops (e.g., onions), a woman will leave her husband home to care for the house, older children, and fields while she takes the harvest to market in La Paz or other trade center. Periodically, women from Vitocota shop and trade in nearby centers, such as Escoma or Chuma, for goods not home-grown or locally produced. Sometimes the trip is planned as an excursion for the whole family. Husbands are sometimes sent by their wives to purchase items in the marketplace, but it is considered a risky venture as the men are likely to pay too much. Most large purchases—a bicycle, for example—are agreed upon mutually by the partners in a marriage; only exceptionally will a man go ahead with a purchase against his wife's wishes.

Education and the Cultural Environment

As more Aymara attend school or travel outside villages like Vitocota, they come in contact with people and institutions that differ from their own. The dominant culture in Bolivia, politically and socially, is Hispanic. Most Spanish-speaking Bolivians have imbibed the values of the Iberian peninsula along with its language. A notable feature of this Hispanic cultural complex is a preference for dealing "man to man" on important issues. In their relations with these "outsiders," the Aymara superficially comply. An Aymara woman's decision or opinion is relayed through her husband—who states it as he knows the _misti_ expects him to; i.e., as his own.

A grammatical particular adds to the impression of male dominance that is created. In Aymara the designation of singular and plural is grammatically optional. A speaker of Aymara does not, ordinarily, mark number. On the other hand, Aymara demands that the inclusion or exclusion of the second person, "you," always be marked. Therefore, the Aymara who speak Spanish have taken two forms in Spanish (English is just like Spanish at this point), the forms _yo_, "I," and _nosotros_, "we," which make for them a meaningless distinction, and used them for a meaningful distinction; i.e., _yo_ means "not-you" and _nosotros_ means "you-included." Thus, an Aymara speaker talking to an outsider about Aymara matters will use what to the Aymara is the "not-you" form, but which the outsider understands as the singular form: my house, my field, my potatoes, I plant, I harvest, I buy, I sell, etc.

naya - I, we, but not you
nanaka - all of us, but none of you
jiwasa - you and I and maybe some others
jiwasanaka - all of us including all of you

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Film Dialogue
We women . . . we're not strong.
Yes . . . boy babies are more valuable.

A boy is support for us . . . security.
You are so right.

School is necessary for boys.

For girls it's not really necessary.

We are in different times . . . boys and girls both go to school!

In my time there wasn't "Going to school." There wasn't any school.

If there had *been "Going to school" . . . Wow! We would know how to read and write!*

For girls it's different . . .
They want to go, too.

Some families send their girls. I do not.
Women in conversation

Because of the pattern of culture contact and because socioeconomic mobility requires Spanish, Aymara women attach great importance to formal schooling for their sons. They often determine that at least one of their sons shall have a "good" education. The women have been at the center of community organizations, particularly after the 1952 revolution, formed to build schools. These buildings are the pride of the community, and often the best in the area. Afterward, the women have petitioned the government for teachers. The women then push their sons, with or without the approval of their husbands, into attending school. (Every Aymara man I have known who has achieved a relatively high level of education has been pushed there by his mother—often herself illiterate and monolingual in Aymara—and sometimes lacking the father's consent.) Because the dominant Hispanic society, which also determines the curricula, opens fewer and less attractive doors for girls, obviously there is less perceived need for their formal schooling. If a family cannot afford to send all its children to school, preference will be given to the boys; the choice, however, reflects attitudes in the dominant culture, not among the Aymara.

In the marketplace, women keep accurate commercial accounts in their heads, and the girls learn from their mothers to do complex arithmetical operations rapidly. They are also able to remember accounts for people whom they have dealt with over long periods. One old woman I know, illiterate, can recount all the debts incurred in her village over the last 60 years, the amount of the principal, to whom it is owed, and how much interest has accrued. She can remember with equal facility how much certain goods cost and when.

Marriage, Kin, and Community

Marriage is a long, heavily symbolic process among the Aymara—not a simple ceremony. Permission for sexual activity is a minor or negligible aspect of a rite which has as its focus the stabilizing of community life and property. Completion of all the ceremonies attendant to marriage may even take several years.*

Marriages among the Aymara come about in various ways:

(a) The marriage may be arranged by the parents. This is not frequent, and accounts for most of the very young marriages.

(b) A couple in love may ask their parents to arrange a marriage. This is the expensive, formal way, and quite desirable. It may look to an outsider like (a) because of the couple's reticence in revealing affection publicly. Afterward this arrangement may be claimed to have been the first because of continued reluctance to admit what goes on in the fields or pastures.

(c) The couple may elope, thus forcing parents to make arrangements. This is the cheaper way, and may be sanctioned by the parents without their necessarily admitting it, if finances are a problem.

Before any marriage takes place, godparents must be selected. (In some Aymara villages, two sets of godparents are chosen.) The godparents are responsible for seeing that the prospective husband and wife receive good advice and that they get along well. In addition, if a marriage goes on the rocks, particularly in the early stages, the godparents are held responsible. Because it is their reputation that suffers, it is difficult to persuade someone to be a godparent unless he or she feels the couple is compatible. From the moment the first steps are taken toward the marriage ceremony, the importance of cooperation in Aymara culture is made clear, not only the cooperation and "living well" between the partners of the marriage, but also the ties and obligations of the couple now becoming complete people within the community. And the reciprocal relationships extend through the generations. Couples who do not get along reasonably well have trouble later getting godparents for their children, and thus trouble getting people for *mink'a* and *ayni*, and so on.

In the marriage preparations and ceremonies a strong emphasis is also placed on productivity and industry. Both the bride's and

Film Dialogue

My girls have asked me, "Why didn't you put me in the school?

"I might have learned one or two words.

"When you saw me old enough, you sent me out with the sheeps, pigs, and llamas

. . . when you saw me older, you ordered me to work in the fields." My girls tell me this.

"We wanted to read and write because the houses in La Paz have numbers on them.

"We wanted to learn . . . so we might live without problems." That's how my girls talk.

Aymara woman

FILM LINK

Film Dialogue

Did you talk with many boys before marrying?

I wasn't my husband's friend before marriage.
Without ever talking, we came together.

All of a sudden we were married.

I never talked with boys in the pastures . . .

My father was my husband's best friend. He brought him to our house many times.

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*See William E. Carter, "Trial Marriage in the Andes?" forthcoming in *Andean Kinship and Marriage*, Ralph Bolton, editor.

the groom's wedding finery is designed to display their industry. The concern is less with beauty than in demonstrating how productive each one is. In this way, the couple provides evidence of prior achievements, having already worked to acquire or make their finery. Thus they are assumed to be off to a good start. Gifts—in money and goods—are gratefully received by the godparents on behalf of the couple. These tokens are, in fact, *ayni*. Collectively, the gifts are viewed as a type of loaned capital which gives the young couple something to work with and simultaneously expresses the faith of the community in the future productiveness of the couple. The *ayni* debts symbolized by the gifts will be paid off over a period of many years, and represent the strong ties to the community the couple assumes at marriage. In one of the marriage ceremonies, all the money the couple has received is wrapped in a bundle and placed on the woman's back. Hers to dispense and control, it is symbolic of her role in family finances. Other ceremonies are similarly concerned with property, almost always in land. Usually, the young couple's parents will give them a portion of the family's land, either as an outright gift in lieu of rights on inheritance or in usufruct until disposition by the parents.

By the time all the ceremonies have been completed, the couple has shown the community some evidence of their seriousness and productivity, has received some land to work, and is indebted to most of the people around them. Equally important, the couple has some capital and the support of the community, which has an interest—an investment, in fact—in the success of the enterprise. The newly married couple, moreover, will help to launch other new couples, and thus will have people indebted to them, again strengthening community ties.

The Aymara marriage is the coming together of two kin groups and the establishing of new kin ties, particularly ceremonial ties. It establishes for them a position of responsibility within the community. The two individuals remain two individuals. No names are changed at marriage, and all property remains individually held, although jointly cultivated, and will be disposed of individually, usually through equal inheritance to each child from each parent. In none of the Aymara ceremonies is the role of the woman shown or felt to be less than that of the man—different, but not less. If anything, the woman's role is more valued because of her edge in productivity. Only in those cases where a Catholic or Protestant ceremony is held as one of the many ceremonies does the woman assume inferior status because of her sex. In Latin or Spanish, such ceremonies may be largely or entirely unintelligible to the participants, although some are now held in Aymara. Aymara itself has had to be distorted in the attempt to express the lower status accorded woman within the Christian marriage. Even so, the Christian ceremony is but one of 10 or 15 ceremonies Aymara perform over a period of many months.

FILM LINK

Marriage is not romanticized among the Aymara, and there are numerous folk sayings to the effect that singles have it made and

Aymara girls.

that marriage is hard work and expensive. The women in the film comment favorably, at one point, on some elderly single women living quite well. At the same time, the verb "to marry," *jaqichasiña*, literally means to cause oneself to become a person, and full status in the community is reserved for those who are married. Despite these ambivalent attitudes, virtually everyone eventually marries—some very late indeed. There are few young marriages; the average age is between 25 and 35, although late thirties or early forties marriages are not unusual.

No Aymara woman goes into marriage expecting anything but hard work—nor does any Aymara man for that matter. Life is very hard for the Aymara woman. It is not the structure of her society but the harshness of her physical environment. Hers are the problems of the human condition. Poor health, crop losses, high mortality rates—all take their toll. Realistic and reliable methods for controlling childbearing are not available, although some native herbs and remedies may indeed be effective for some purposes. The Aymara woman is subject to the difficulties that all women everywhere have always faced: too many children, not enough children, children too late, children too early, and all the risks inherent in bringing forth the much valued new generation.

To wail and bemoan one's fate and the hardness of life—and thus to instruct the young not to expect too much—is a frequent

Film Dialogue

This old mother of mine had many children! She complied by delivering 12 apostles.

Three of us are living . . . 2 women . . . 1 man. There were 12.

They say one must comply with 12 apostles. I complied with 12, too.

I have 8 sons . . . 4 daughters . . . 8 boys and 4 girls.

My husband hated my last 2 boy babies . . .

He said, "Why have you had all these children?! You breed like an animal!"

What can the mothers do? We have to raise them!

Women in conversation

and almost ritualistic act for Aymara women, and it is accompanied by a characteristic intonation pattern, a specific style of speech and language forms, and frequently tears, which are dried away immediately upon completion of the lament. Such lamentation rituals tend toward extreme and absolute statements, tempered by Aymara syntactic construction too complex for translation in film subtitles.* "I'm not needed anymore, nobody loves me. My children have forgotten me, I'll go away forever." It is as if talking about the joys of life might tempt ill fortune, always lurking in so harsh an environment; therefore, exaggerate the bad so it won't get worse—and let the young know that nothing comes easily.

Directions of Change

The lot of the Aymara woman is made more difficult by the sexism of the dominant society, and it becomes progressively more difficult as Aymara men are influenced by Hispanic custom. She is not allowed to be heard, her accomplishments are either credited to her men or discounted, and, although she controls the marketplace, even in cities like La Paz, her status outside her own people is unrecognized. Yet many of the truck fleets, for example, carrying produce into La Paz are owned by Aymara women, who may have men driving for them. Some Aymara women drive themselves. The 1966 Bolivian National Auto Racing competition was won by an Aymara woman.

Because the dominant society projects itself onto the Aymara, and ignorantly presumes Aymara men run everything, efforts to help the Aymara "develop" regularly turn into "failures." Two recent examples suffice to illustrate the patterns. International development agencies chose a number of Aymara men to be instructed in rabbit-breeding and sheep-shearing. The Aymara women in both cases thought it was all very funny, but never told the outsiders. The outsiders did not ask and never approached the women. The outsiders took the whole affair very seriously, of course, with diplomas, ceremonies, and all the appropriate trappings. The Aymara men politely played just the role the outsiders wanted while they were there. Because Aymara women control the livestock, whatever good suggestions the instructors might have made were wasted. They were simply talking to the wrong people. In a similar case, an attempt to improve agricultural production through seed selection and/or introduction bypassed the women who in practice control the potato and other crop seed.

The sexism of the dominant culture is felt increasingly among the Aymara. Two channels of influence are particularly important and sometimes overlap; the experience of education in Protestant schools and the process of adjustment in an urban, and therefore more Hispanic, environment. In some cases the lot of the rural Aymara woman may deteriorate. Men who are gentle, cooperative farmers in the country may become brutal wife-beaters in the city as they become less pagan (more Christian by missionary

FILM LINK

*It is quite difficult to translate Aymara into English. First, every Aymara sentence carries with it a suffix to mark the data source: Did the speaker witness the event? Was knowledge by hearsay? By inference? Or not witnessed by anyone? Or outside the involvement of the speaker? We do not do this in English, and in fact, if we wish to indicate anything about data source we must usually add another clause. (Our legal profession attempts to deal with this difficulty all the time—with only moderate success, as anyone attempting to read legalese will attest.) Therefore, the answer to any question in Aymara includes one of these suffixes, which is then ignored when translating (correctly) into English. Over the course of the movie, however, the effect is quite different from that obtained by reading the full Aymara text. For example, in the translation as it appears in the subtitle, the speaker, as a woman, says that women are weak. But her actual statement uses a suffix to indicate that the speaker is not involved. The more accurate rendering is "they say we're weak, but I wouldn't know about that."

standards) and more urbane (more civilized by dominant culture standards). Where conversion to Protestantism has occurred, Aymara women may be urged by the missionaries to be subservient to their husbands when Aymara culture would demand no such thing. In such cases women may learn to denigrate themselves verbally, often without understanding what that should mean culturally—and therefore without implementation. With the spread of public schooling, both Aymara men and women have become more adept at mouthing sex role concepts from the Western world. Understanding them is something else.*

Married couples do, of course, quarrel; the frequency of "perfect marriages" among the Aymara is probably not much greater than anywhere in human society. The fights are not necessarily one-sided, however; note that in the fight described in the film, it was the *daughter* and the *daughter-in-law* who took care of the man—stopped him and put him in his place. Women regularly break up the men's fights, and if the men are drunk, the women take them home and put them to bed.

* * * * *

The Aymara community of Vitocota is close knit. Social pressures favor marriage, and divorce or separation is not common. However, no Aymara woman is obliged economically to remain with a man: she owns her own land, and she controls the finances. She often has a place in the market where she can buy and sell (and shrewd bargainers they are) and is generally considered capable of doing "anything."

In the film's last scene, when the young girl and boy are asked to move aside so that an older man may take water from the well, we see clearly that it is age and not sex that determines the man's brusque tone. As the children mature in a world ever more conscious of woman's role, it is to be hoped that their own traditional values may come to be appreciated by the larger society and that they themselves may be exemplars of their industrious and cooperative society.

FILM
LINK

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*Upon hearing some of these platitudes, I have occasionally responded by explaining their meaning for Anglo-Saxon or Spanish law or custom; the reaction is almost always one of shock and/or disbelief and the cultural repercussions of the introduction of male dominance and the consequent devaluing of women are not yet known.

"Don Alejo digging potatoes."

BOLIVIA

5

Beliefs

THE SPIRIT POSSESSION OF ALEJANDRO MAMANI

by THOMAS G. SANDERS

Alejandro Mamani is an old man. As this film is being made, Don Alejandro is about 81 years of age and is drawing near the end of his long life. Like almost everyone in Vitocota, a small Bolivian village on the Eastern Andean slopes near Lake Titicaca, he is a peasant. And like his fellow villagers he still spends long hours in physically demanding work to wrest a living from the soil and his animals. He continues to show an extraordinary vigor by exercising a dominant role in his family and their agricultural tasks, many years after most men his age in "modern" societies have retired or died.

Alejandro is also a symbol of humanity. The problems and anxieties that afflict him are common to elderly people everywhere. He differs from North Americans, however, in that the Aymara culture provides a distinctive set of beliefs and practices which define the way he interprets his ordeal.

Within the framework of his family and village—the only institutions that matter for him—Don Alejo* (as he was called in Vitocota) has earned a position of respect by virtue of his age, his adherence to the accepted tasks of society, his sense of responsibility, and his generosity. He has fulfilled family obligations by taking care of his sister, who had to leave the village of their birth and had no other place to go. He was kind to his wife and did not beat her. In Vitocota he is considered a wealthy man: he not only has had sufficient land and animals to make a living, but he also was able to confirm title to his estate "for his children," despite expense and bureaucratic obstruction. Alejandro merits the esteem of his fellow villagers as a *pasatu* who has served in all the secular and religious offices, helping finance the costly ceremonies and fiestas that provide cohesion, a precarious sense of security, emotional release and fun for the community.

Don Alejo, however, is bothered by problems common to aged persons. The lifelong friends of his generation have died. He worries about his daughters, who are sometimes mistreated by their husbands, and he fears they may suffer more when he dies. Perhaps he recognizes that although his children show him deference and respect, they also have their own lives which they must plan without him. Responsible to the end, he wants to be sure that his estate is settled so that his heirs will not quarrel over their shares. He has already given away his portable wealth—cash, flocks of chickens, goats and sheep, household items—and has become dependent on his family for his own daily sustenance. All that remains is his land, two relatively large parcels and small garden plots near his house.

Film Dialogue

So I got busy . . . I had to secure this land.

I went to Chuma, then Qapuri, then to La Paz.

I legalized my forefathers' wills that were done long ago in Paripampa . . .

I might have been like Suxsun.
I could have lost it all.

It is good I was here.
The women couldn't do anything.

Besides we were prevented from doing business . . .

. . . no freedom.

Those town people cheated us at their pleasure . . . took our money.

The clerks would say, "Come back next Monday . . . .

We were nothing more than their ladder.

Although we served them well, we got the same treatment.

That's how it used to be. So I worked without stopping.

I didn't let them steal a single grain of sand.

All this was for my children.

Alejandro Mamani

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*"Don" is a Spanish honorific; its equivalent in Aymara is "Tata."

Alejandro Mamani

Film Dialogue

The evil spirits took advantage of my sleeping . . .

. . . and entered my body.

When I woke, I came back.

Now these spirits don't leave me.

Alejandro Mamani

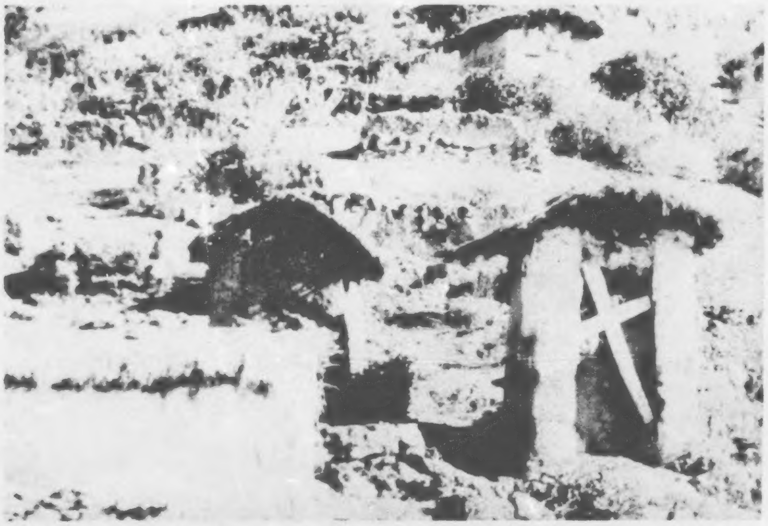
The normal concerns of old age are aggravated in Don Alejo's case because he has become possessed by spirits. As he explains it, he went to the interment of a friend in the cemetery, where he participated in ceremonial drinking. He became drunk, as is common in Aymara family and community rituals such as funerals. The cemetery is a dangerous enough place in any event, for according to Aymara belief the spirits of the dead dwell there and, if not properly treated, will bring death and misfortune to individuals and to the community. On the way home, overwhelmed by his intoxication, he fell asleep at Llawlli Puncu, a rock formation topped by a eucalyptus tree and a well-known habitat of evil spirits. One must always be on guard against potentially malevolent spirits, and Don Alejo, weakened, drunk, and sleeping, was especially vulnerable. With his defenses down, several spirits or demons took advantage of him and entered his body. They include the rock spirits from Llawlli Puncu, the echo and wind spirits (which the Aymara consider malevolent), and the spirits of the dead.

Although Don Alejo can talk openly and frankly about his sickness, he is obviously suffering gravely. He cannot sleep at night, and when he does doze off, he has nightmares in which the spirits appear as men and women, dancing, conversing, and arguing with him. As his illness progresses, they increase their visits from nighttime to daytime as well. According to Don Alejo's children, one of the spirits has adopted the guise of his dead wife, and this is why he is attracted to it, for the Aymara believe the spirit of a recently dead person tries to pull others after it.

The Aymara consider dreams a form of omens and automatically assume that they have significance for the individual who experiences them and often for the community as well. The voices Don Alejo hears convey various messages. At times they threaten to destroy him, and on other occasions they bargain with him, demanding gifts or sacrifices. Don Alejo's response alternates between resistance and acquiescence: first he insults the spirits, then threatens to kill himself. Another voice, from the spirit of the lake, dissuades him from suicide, arguing that the village cannot do without him. The Aymara frequently threaten to commit suicide, but it is not a socially sanctioned act and few people actually carry out the threat.

Don Alejo has been sick for a year. The voices that ran through his dreams at night now assault his mind even during the day. Despite repeated attempts to be cured, nothing seems effective. He feels his illness is getting worse and worse. Moreover, both modern psychology and Aymara culture would agree with Don Alejo that he is a sick man. They disagree, however, on the meaning of the spirit possession. Many interpretations of modern psychology would view his belief in spirits as a manifestation of his illness; the Aymara, to the contrary, consider belief in and encounter with spirits as perfectly normal.

Although many "rational" modern persons claim not to believe in spirits, the experience is not a bizarre characteristic of the Aymara but is also rooted deeply in our own culture. Millions of North Americans and Europeans, for example, base their religious beliefs on the New Testament account of Jesus Christ, who



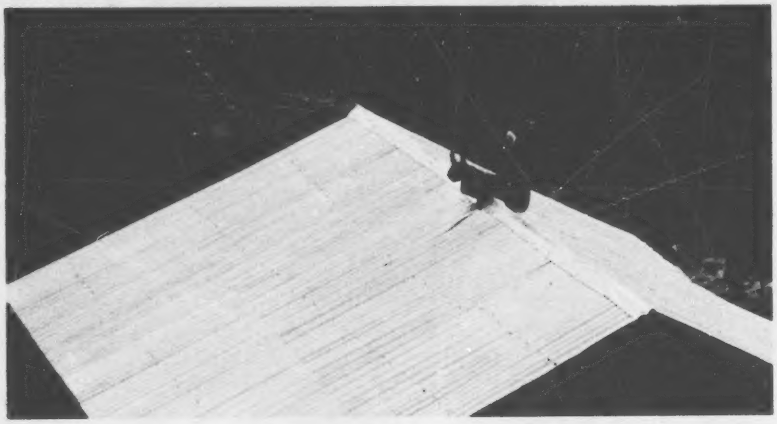
Vitocota's cemetery.

clearly associates physical and mental illness with spirit possession. Casting out spirits and demons is not a peripheral part of the Gospels, but rather a central sign of the Kingdom of God which Jesus proclaims. Jesus converses with the spirits, exorcises them, and in one notable case, transfers them from their victim to a herd of pigs, which in turn are driven by the spirits over a cliff to drown. (The curers whom Don Alejo consults also attempt to transfer the spirits from him to animals, including a pig.) Although this particular aspect of early Christian belief is not emphasized by many churchgoers, others demythologize it or find no difficulty in accepting it. In addition, historical Christianity's emphasis on saints, angels, and demons reflects a belief in multiple intermediaries who, like the spirits at Llawlli Puncu, can affect an individual for good or evil and who can be petitioned or controlled.

Many other modern persons have at least a superficial belief in "ghosts," which are the disembodied spirits of dead persons and are especially associated with places like cemeteries and haunted houses. In Western culture, on All Saints' Eve, more commonly called Halloween, ghosts and other dangerous spirits are traditionally believed to be especially active. Similarly, the Aymara believe that the spirits of those who have died in recent years return at the period of All Saints and will bring misfortune to their relatives unless they are fed and honored. To avoid this, they prepare a table in the same place where the body lay during the wake, with offerings of bread shaped like animals, fruit, food, coca, cigarettes, and alcohol. Part of the food is given to young people who go from house to house (like North American trick-or-treaters) and offer prayers for the well-being of the soul, and part is taken the next day to the cemetery, where it is placed on the grave along with confetti and other decorations.

The "modern" person is thus not too different from Don Alejo Mamani and other Aymara. The widespread interest in the occult, which is characteristic of our times, stems from an apprehension about the unknown and a suspicion that supernatural forces affect human beings and can be manipulated to one's benefit or detriment. Many individuals in the United States and Europe also talk with God, saints, and angels, feel themselves tempted by demons, see little men descending from flying-saucers, or like Don Alejo, dialogue with spirits. Such beliefs are almost universal and not necessarily pathological unless they drive their victims to pain and actions as tragic as Alejo's suicide. Modern culture's pretense to rationality and secularism tends to cover its belief in spirits with ambiguity, while the Aymara unhesitatingly assume that they share the world they know with spirits. Human beings are not alone in the Aymara world; one has only to open one's eyes to discern the benevolence and malevolence that are caused by supernatural powers.

A nature religion has a certain reasonableness in a peasant society. Those who cultivate the soil and see their crops grow, breed animals, and experience the terrors of rain, hail, lightning, wind, and drought are familiar with the capricious power of nature. In an abrupt terrain like the Bolivian *altiplano* or the Andean slope where Vitocota is located, the sky seems very near to the earth. Physical features such as mountains, rivers, lakes, grottos, springs, and curiously shaped rocks seem to thrust themselves out abruptly, symbolizing the vigor of nature. Individual human beings depend profoundly on the land—for building houses, gathering or cultivating food, burying the dead—and they are inclined to anthropomorphize nature, then seek favor with and offer compensation to the custodians of the resources they are using.



A wooden cross and bull atop a house in Vitocota. This symbolism is seen again among the dancers celebrating the festival of Santiago in the film, "Magic and Catholicism."

The Aymara environment is literally full of spirits.

The extreme dependence on nature among the Aymara and other Andean peoples results in an uncertain and precarious existence. Survival itself may turn on the rains being neither too heavy nor too light, on whether the fish bite or the seed potatoes sprout. Hail storms and winds are especially terrifying and like drought, are a constant destructive threat to crops. For individuals, being struck by lightning is a common fear. Similarly the Aymara concern with illness and curing stems from the variety of diseases they suffer, their frequency, and the suddenness, and thus mysteriousness, with which they die. Although an individual's relationships with others, prestige in the community, and participation in the fiestas provide a degree of satisfaction, Aymara life is often also one of suffering, deprivation, physically exhausting work, sudden tragedy, and often an early death. While Aymara have a high degree of fatalism, much activity that we call "religious" is aimed at trying to influence favorably the natural forces that affect human existence.

Contemporary Aymara spiritism is a heritage from the period before the Spanish Conquest that they shared with other Andean peoples. Though we know very little about the Aymara before the Conquest, the religion of the Incas, who conquered the Aymara and incorporated them into their Empire, was described by a number of Spanish and native chroniclers. The Incas, like the contemporary Aymara, were preoccupied with guaranteeing a supply of food and curing sickness, and their religion was patterned accordingly. They consulted and made offerings to spirits who represented natural forces and were localized in sacred places called *huaca* (Aymara: *waká*). Almost any unusual natural form—springs, stones, hills—was believed to have this power, which entailed a certain sacredness and force. Like the contemporary Aymara, the Incas sacrificed food, *chicha*, and coca to the spirits of the *huacas* to guarantee their support in such vital matters as growing crops and overcoming disease. All illness was believed to be caused by supernatural forces and had to be cured by religious or magical means. Among the causes of sickness were ritual neglect of supernatural beings, sorcery, evil spirits in winds, springs, or rocks (like Don Alejo), or loss of the soul from fright. Curers diagnosed the difficulty by divination, using coca leaves or animals such as llamas, guinea pigs, or birds. To overcome the problem, they made offerings or "sucked" offending objects out of the body by various means.

The Aymara environment, as they perceive it, is literally full of spirits, with whom living men and women are closely associated because they too become spirits when they die. Some spirits attach to specific places—mountain peaks, lakes, streams, houses, fields, rocks, ruins, grottos, caves, cemeteries, and the cairns along trails that have been slowly built up from the stones, coca quids, and other objects added to them by travelers. Other spirits are more generalized, like the spirits of the air, the echo, the dead, the earth, or a variety of demons and saints.

According to Harry Tschopik, the common categories of spirits are the following:

1) Guardians or house spirits which watch over residences. Though not malevolent, they are defenders of morality and can punish violators. They must be propitiated by offering a few drops of alcohol at the doorstep or tossing some on the four walls of the house. The Aymara place crosses on the roof as symbols of the blessing of the house spirit.

2) Place spirits who inhabit fields, rocks, grottos, cairns, or any definable locale. They correspond to human beings in their capacity to eat, drink, and chew coca, but they differ in being supernatural. Sometimes they are good, sometimes evil. The Aymara believe these spirits can speak and give information, and they are often consulted through divination on such matters as sickness, theft, and the success of trips. The Aymara make offerings to the place spirits for general guidance and protection as well as to elicit response on specific issues. In building a new house, for example, they sacrifice a llama foetus to the place spirit to guarantee well-being in the home.

3) Nature spirits include such forces as the earth (Pačamama), rivers, volcanoes, Lake Titicaca, hail, winds, and lightning. In the Aymara syncretism between their traditional beliefs and Roman Catholicism, these natural forces are often associated with saints. Pačamama, Mother Earth, for example, is represented as the Virgin Mary carrying a child, Lake Titicaca is symbolized as St. Peter, and lightning is identified with Santiago (St. James). Santiago, a potentially cruel saint who strikes (with lightning bolts) those who fail to do him homage is the patron saint of Vitocota. Pačamama is a generalized fertility deity who is often invoked and offered the first drops of a drink. She represents the central benevolent natural force still surviving from the traditional Aymara pantheon. Hail, winds, and lightning, on the other hand, are greatly feared, and offerings are made to keep them away.

Some meteorological phenomena are not directly associated with specific spirits. Rain, for example, is controlled by certain mountains, while the spirits of the dead bring drought.

4) "Owners" are spirits who watch over animals and must be given offerings to insure that the flocks will prosper and increase. Offerings are made during llama mating season and before shearing. Fishermen make offerings to the spirit of Lake Titicaca who owns the fish they want to catch.

5) A variety of demons are associated with places or wander through space. Some live in springs, caves, and unusual rock formations. Demons generally are believed to inhabit all ancient ruins and will afflict those who disturb them with disease. A few are more individualized: the *qatari*, for example, is a monster in

Lake Titicaca; the ***ančanču***, an animal wearing a basket on its head who strikes with insanity those who see it; the *qeti qeti*, a human head that flies through the air, crying, and sucks the blood of its victims; and the *q'ariq'ari*, who cuts open its victims and steals their heart or soul.

While it is useful to distinguish the spirits by types, the Aymara do not have a completely consistent, hierarchical ranking or theology concerning them. Rather, their world view presumes a multiplicity of spirits in all directions, horizontal and vertical, which are potentially threatening or beneficial, and to which human beings respond by appropriate propitiations and by sharing what they have. Though the Aymara associate particular spirits and rituals with certain specified functions, it is common on any important occasion to invoke and offer alcohol or coca to a wide variety, the Pačamama, the house guardian, and whatever other spirits come to mind, whether the ancestral spirits of the mountains (***ačačilas***), the dead, the road, or the fields. The spirits cited often include the Christian God, Christ, Mary, and various saints. Such invocations occur frequently, especially when an individual is doing something out of the ordinary or when omens—which are multitudinous—suggest that good luck be sought or danger avoided.

The inconsistency about spirits is reflected in Don Alejo's attempts to explain the cause of his illness. In the film dialogue, he sometimes blames his problems on the spirit of the rock at Llawlli Puncu, at other times on the dead or the winds, and at still others, on a collection of spirits.

Among the Aymara, an affliction such as that which Don Alejo suffers calls for divination, to determine who the spirit is, and curing, to drive it away. In Don Alejo's experience, the spirits keep him from sleeping by dancing (a dance called the *chatre*), playing flutes, wearing headdresses, and talking to him—all typical fiesta actions. Don Alejo calls his night visitors *viracochas*, indicating that they are not peasants, but *mestizos* or whites. His children are subjected to his nightly ravings which keep them awake.

For a man who has been a pillar of his community, his possession and consequent aberrant behavior is a source of deep embarrassment; Don Alejo would rather die than have people laugh at him. Thus he turns to reputed diviners and curers in Vitocota. In the film's opening scene Don Alejo explains that he "investigated" and "discovered" who the spirits were. His unfortunate experience at the cemetery and Llawlli Puncu had made clear the source of the spirits. The divining/curing ceremonies occur at night in his own house and are carried out by reading coca leaves, letting them drop one-by-one from the hand and discerning meaning from the pattern in which they fall. The ceremony also includes prayers to the spirits, special gestures, and the drinking of alcohol. (It was agreed not to film the ceremonies so as not to jeopardize their effectiveness.)

In each case, the *yatiris* (curers) propose a treatment, though in some cases the spirits themselves indicate to Don Alejo the gifts that will satisfy them. These include a brown dog, a red rooster, lizards, a baby pig, a baby chick. The object is to transfer the spirit(s) from Don Alejo to the other creatures. The *yatiris* usually spend the night with Don Alejo and the specified animals, then take the animals at dawn to Llawlli Puncu and set them free. The assumption is that during the night the spirits will have entered the body of one of the animals and once at Llawlli Puncu, they will be too far from Don Alejo to establish themselves in him again. (Aymara will not adopt stray animals for fear that they are vehicles for evil spirits that have been transferred to them.)

In one cure Don Alejo describes, he tells how he fumigated the spirit of the hurricane wind with sulfur. The sulfur was purchased in Vitocota from a *Callawaya*, a member of a well-known group of healers from the town of Charazani, about one day's walk from Vitocota. The spirit left Don Alejo temporarily, but now he demands a chick, pig, horseshoes, and sewing needles to remain at Llawlli Puncu.

The coexistence of traditional and modern concepts of medicine in Vitocota is reflected in the willingness of Don Alejo and his son-in-law to consider other modes of healing. His children consult a doctor in Ayata, but they lack confidence in his ability, compared with the traditional Aymara curers "who know their business." They distinguish an obvious physical problem, such as parasites, that the doctor can heal, from psychological illness, which the Aymara curers understand better. The delightful comment about madmen in La Paz reflects the Aymara wit and humor. Don Alejo even approaches the filmmakers in hopes that their "machine" (the camera) could look into his body and identify the spirits. (He had heard that foreign machines can do magical things. The filmmakers had to tell him that the camera will not help him, but they do eventually give him some sleeping pills.)

As the expenses for the animals and objects used in the curing mount, Don Alejo's children become more critical about the financial drain, for it is they who have to pay since he has already given them all his possessions except land. Knowing that he is old, they wonder why he does not solve his and their problem by dying, and they argue over whether they should pay for still another cure. Don Alejo is obviously disappointed in them and criticizes them when he calls them together to make his last will and testament.

Don Alejo brings together his family (the potential heirs), two friends (witnesses), and the schoolteacher, who is the best educated person in the community and can write the document which is necessary to verify the land transfer with the government authorities. The potential heirs argue over their respective shares of land, an Aymara's most valuable possession, but on the basis of

Film Dialogue

He says the evil spirit has withdrawn.

But I must pay the spirit to seal the bargain.

I certainly hope he's right.

Q: *That would be good.* (Interviewer)

Yes, the spirit wants horseshoes.

Two . . . a pair . . .

. . . and also large and small sewing needles.

Q: *And what else?* (interviewer)

A baby pig, a baby chick . . .

I have the chick. But not the pig. My family may buy one for me.

That repulsive being demands all this.

Don Alejo

Film Dialogue

The town doctor has asked $5 to cure him.

He knows nothing of such illnesses.

La Paz is full of madmen.

If the town people knew a cure, they'd cure them first.

Don Alejo's son-in-law and grandson.

Don Alejo sits apart, while others of the family celebrate a birthday.

customary principles they work out a satisfactory arrangement. All the children have a right to inherit, male or female, as Aymara women can own property. Though there is some dispute, Don Alejo decides to leave a portion of his land to a woman who is not his biological daughter, but whom he has reared from a little child. The fact that individuals customarily till a particular parcel plays a role in determining their priority in inheriting it. In the end, the land is divided approximately equally among the four children. Though there is no surveying or measuring, each of the parcels bears the name of its place spirit and is known by location and qualities to the participants, who have worked in them as a family. The influence of attitude on nature is reflected in the affirmation that giving the land voluntarily will make it more fertile, but if done involuntarily, the giver will be judged.

Film Dialogue

I feel bad . . . completely bad.

What can you do?
What do you think?

I only think of death, sir.

I no longer think of living.

Don Alejo

Typically, the ceremony ends with a small party, sealing the agreements by invoking God and Pacamama, kissing the cross, drinking together, embracing, and tossing confetti. Don Alejo has settled his affairs with his family and community. Though he does not want to die, the spirits are afflicting him more than ever. He is now free to think of death and take the fatal jump which he has often threatened, but from which he has shrunk.

Although suicide is disapproved in Aymara culture, Don Alejandro Mamani is remembered and esteemed in Vitocota. His children and neighbors seem to understand why he did what he did, and they know and are pleased that his memory—and his greatness as a human being—are permanently preserved in this and the other AUFS films.

BOLIVIA

6

Beliefs

Magic and Catholicism

by THOMAS G. SANDERS

The inhabitants of Vitocota, a small village of only about 35 families, have a complex set of religious attitudes, symbols, and practices which they share with other Aymara and Quechua speakers of the Andean region. The elements of their religion are drawn from two sources: (1) the traditional Andean beliefs and ceremonies which are focused around natural forces and the need to control their power for the benefit of human beings; and (2) Roman Catholicism, which was brought into the region by the Spanish conquerors and has continued until today as the predominant formal religion of modern Bolivia.

Religious Syncretism in Vitocota

Such a mixture of diverse components from different origins is called religious *syncretism.** Syncretistic religion characteristically combines elements from two or more different perspectives into a comfortable, tension-free relationship. While a Western viewer observing Vitocotans celebrating the "Catholic" fiesta of Santiago and the traditional ceremony for guaranteeing a good agricultural year often emphasizes the contrasts between the two, the participants themselves perceive them as part of a total coherent system. They bring a common attitude to both ceremonies, one which reveals a profound sense of dependence on outside forces that include both Santiago and the spirits of natural phenomena.

House on outskirts of vitacota.

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*The syncretic process did not begin with the Spanish Conquest, of course, but took place for centuries beforehand through borrowing or imposition of features from other indigenous groups such as the Incas, who conquered the Aymara in the fifteenth century A.D. Thus, the "traditional" religious complex itself is an expression of syncretism, to which Catholicism made further additions.

The Aymara (and many other peasant peoples in South America) succeeded in joining together their older traditions, which were based on natural forces and processes, with certain elements of Catholicism, a non-nature religion, by revising and incorporating the new symbols into a common perspective. The key to the fusion was to *experience* the Catholic saints and the functions associated with them in a manner similar to the way they experienced the forces more specifically associated with nature. The patron saint of Vitocota, Santiago, becomes one more among many powerful beings with which human beings must deal, like Pačamama (the earth mother), the Ačačila (ancestral spirits), and the spirit who controls the agricultural year. Lighting candles on the altar is the appropriate way of coming into relationship with and petitioning Santiago, who dwells in the village church, just as more diversified offerings are made in houses and on the mountain top to other traditional spirits who can be reached in these locales. The Trinitarian invocation (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) is a powerful formula that is added to those directed to other spirits, all of which are believed to attract and hopefully to align the unseen forces on the side of human beings. In many cultures to know and call on the name of a being implies a certain amount of contact and control over him. Although to the Western mind the religious outlook of Catholicism and that of the nature spirits may seem distinct and contradictory, they are reconciled and associated without conflict in the world view of the Aymara.

"Magic and Catholicism" is an extraordinary film because we share the experiences of the people of Vitocota as they express such fundamental religious attitudes as dependence on the unseen, concern with fate or luck, belief in the nonempirical causation of natural occurrences, and the sense of sin, guilt, and restoration. All of these are closely interrelated. They have also been a part of the predominant religions in the Western world, but the capacity to appreciate them as they occur either among the Aymara or in traditional Christianity is inhibited by the rationalism and empiricism that are characteristic of many modern intellectual outlooks.

The Aymara are similar to people who work the land in many parts of the world in their pronounced sense of dependence on the outside forces that affect the cycle of individual life and of nature. The uncertainty of many aspects of their existence—sickness, death, the productivity of the soil and animals—as well as the spectacular natural environment around them encourage such an attitude. The Vitocotan is aware every day of the earth, sky, trees, rocks, and mountains that circumscribe his daily activities. The unpredictability of heat and frost, rain and drought, hail and wind, sunlight and clouds, convinces the Aymara that human beings do not live by themselves but are subject to a capricious Nature. The sharp distinction between the human personality and Nature—or between the empirical and the nonempirical—which is in part a product of the Jewish and Christian tradition and in part of modern rationality, differs from the intimate sense of dependence and relationship that the Aymara *feels* toward the world about him.

Luck and the Supernatural

The effects of this dependence are often experienced as good or bad luck. Although many people in the developed world refer to luck casually, reflecting the remnants of a past attitude that once was similar to the Aymara perspective, few have as real and concrete awareness of these alternatives for human well-being as the Aymara.

"Magic and Catholicism" opens in a setting of bad luck. The harvest had not been good in the past year, and to accentuate the community's adversity, several of its members are reported to have been killed in a truck accident en route from La Paz to Vitocota. A cloud of gloom hangs over the lives of the film participants, and the subsequent discovery of damage to the statue of Santiago appears to underline their incapacity to extricate themselves from their fate.

As the film closes, however, the luck of the community seems to be changing. First, the spirits indicate that the coming agricultural year will be good. Later, to complete the transformation, the woman believed to have been killed, who was to have helped sponsor the fiesta, is discovered in a La Paz clinic. According to the Aymara view, this shift from unfavorable to favorable circumstances does not occur by happenstance. Instead, it stems directly from the benevolence of the external forces and their willingness to accept the people's offerings and petitions.

Though the film is short, it includes several scenes in which natural occurrences are ascribed to non-natural causes. As the film opens, the Vitocotans are in the church pleading with Santiago (St. James), who is believed to be present there, expressed in the statue or image. The truck accident, the petitioners believe, was caused by the saint. Although Santiago is cruel, he must nevertheless have had legitimate reasons for what he did. The Vitocotans assume that he "crushed them" in order to punish them or because the victims did not render adequate homage. To restore Santiago's confidence in them, the villagers offer candles, which must burn completely to have effect, because Santiago is watching. The Vitocotans display a close, almost personal relationship with the saint. He is there in the church where they can question and plead with him.

In a subsequent scene, when the damage to the image of Santiago is discovered, the incident is interpreted as a direct assault on him which will have serious consequences. Even though the damage takes place after the truck accident, somehow it is be-

Film Dialogue

Soon we will be quietly back at work, Santiago, my master.

You who work miracles and take care of us for a lifetime.

Forgive me Santiago, my father.

My lord, why didn't you save them?! You crushed them two by two!

You crushed my brother on the road!

You punished him, didn't you?!

Relative of one of the
accident victims

Film Dialogue

Is it because my children have died they hate me so?!

Why has this tragedy happened to us?

* * *

I ask myself, what sin brought this accident?

Mother of the
dead woman

Inside Vitocota's church, the sexton places decorations near the statue of Santiago (in glass box).

FILM LINK

A woman directs the placement of her candle near the statue.

lieved to have retroactive effects. "Cutting a candle," that is, lighting a candle whose wick has been cut and will burn out, according to one person, will reveal the evildoer by bringing about his death.

Natural objects are treated anthropomorphically, as if they too were affected by unseen forces. The women watching their candles in the church note that they burn optimistically or pessimistically. The brother of the dead woman speaks of the truck itself as the instrument which killed her and refers to the truck as dead.

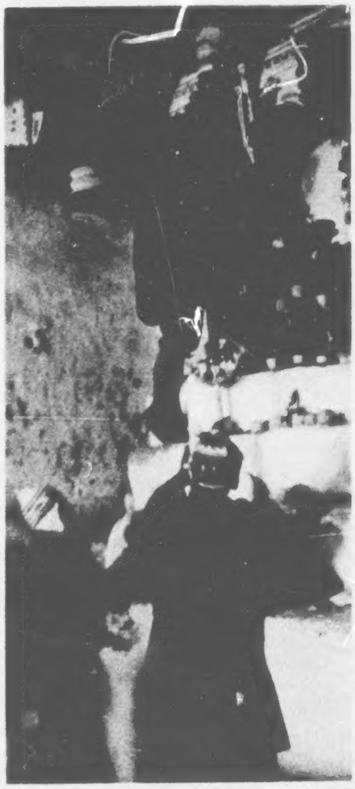
The distinction between magic and Catholicism in the title of the film implies two different relationships within the Vitocotan religious system: a manipulative one (associated with magic), and a devotional one (Catholicism), the former directed toward the traditional entities and the latter toward the saints of Catholicism. In the Aymara world view, such a separation does not exist: the traditional spirits and the Christian entities (Santiago, the Trinity) are conceived of as powers that can be malevolent or benevolent and hence are both invoked—indeed, spoken to as persons—and also manipulated. The outside forces sometimes have clearly defined spheres of influence or action, but the source of generalized good or bad luck can be either Santiago or the natural spirits. Differing ritual actions are carried out to seek the favor of Santiago and the natural forces, but they both have the same manipulative or utilitarian intentions that we commonly associate with magic.

The similarity of attitude among the Aymara toward the Catholic and the traditional spirits is facilitated by associating the saints with natural forces and because Catholic popular devotion to the saints is normally a relationship of petition and response. Santiago, the patron saint of Spain as well as Vitocota, is usually associated in the Aymara world view with lightning. The reason for the affinity is fairly obvious. Lightning is a scourge greatly feared by the Aymara, but also a manifestation of the exceptional power of the sky. According to Harry Tschopik, who studied religious and magical practices in an Aymara community of Peru, a magician receives his "call" to this occupation by being struck by lightning and surviving. The conquerors who fought against and defeated the Andean indigenous societies rode into battle calling on Santiago for help. (The two images of Santiago in Vitocota resemble and are dressed in the manner of a sixteenth century Spanish officer.) It is not difficult to see why the Aymara and other Andean people associated the destructive power that guided the Spaniards with the power of the spirit of lightning. To be sure, the same power which is malevolent also has its opposite aspect—it can be manipulated through formulas and practices into a form of protection. In the words of one Vitocotan, Santiago takes care of them for a lifetime, even though he says this in a context in which Santiago also has arbitrarily killed members of the community.

FILM
LINK

The relationship of Vitocotans to the Catholic patron saint and the nature spirits is a similar utilitarian one of petition and assistance. Popular expressions of Catholicism throughout Latin America do not adhere to the normative theological or devotional concepts found in the official teaching of the Church. Rather, the saints are regarded as personalized forces, almost members of the extended family, to which the individual lights candles or carries out other ritual actions such as visiting shrines or offering prayers. In return, the saint provides protection and help to the individual, family, and community.

Lighting candles at the church altar.



Thus, the magical-manipulative approach to the traditional forces of nature does not differ significantly from the gestures to Santiago. In both cases, the individual and community confront outside powers which are unpredictable and potentially damaging. The fiesta of Santiago and the mountain-top ceremony have the same objective, through petition and offering, to prevent bad luck and to guarantee that the powers will side with individuals and the community in the coming year. Both the traditional and the Catholic entities are invoked because of the Aymara belief in a multiplicity of forces, any of which can be the source of good or evil for the community. This is done without any "logical" separation. At the fiesta of Santiago, for example, the participants invoke Pačamama countless times whenever they toss a few drops of a drink on the ground, while on the mountain top, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are supplicated in the sequence with mountain and agricultural spirits.

The unfortunate happenings for Vitocota (the truck accident and the damage to the saint) bring out another central religious attitude, the sense of sin and guilt which seeks restoration. It is

FILM LINK

intimately linked to an awareness of the influence of particular causes on subsequent events. Such tragedies would not have occurred without reasonable cause. The Vitocotans view their calamities as a form of punishment, though they are uncertain of their precise shortcoming because of the capriciousness of the outside powers. The woman who is believed to have died might not have made the homage to Santiago, or, in the words of another baffled Vitocotan, they might have offended him by their stupidities. The Vitocotans abase themselves before the saint in the scene where the image is placed on their heads and he is asked by the supplicants to tread on them. The existential sequence of sin, guilt, punishment, contrition, forgiveness, and restoration is an important part of the Aymara consciousness.

Ritual and Community

The two ceremonial complexes, the fiesta and the agricultural sacrifice, both occur at the same season of the year. The fiesta lasts for eight days with the principal events on July 25, the day of Santiago in the Catholic calendar. The offering for a good agricultural year takes place in early August. The film was made at the most crucial moment for the agricultural cycle: the people have gathered the harvest, and in late August and early September, they will plant oca and potatoes, both tubers, followed by corn, the three principal staples of the Aymara diet. It is important for the success of the agricultural year to honor all of the powers that might influence it.

Both ceremonies are community events, even though individual participants have a strong personal awareness of the presence and power of the various spirits. While many individuals in Vitocota do not necessarily have good personal relations with each other, they have a strong sense of identification with their community. These ceremonies serve as means of cohesion among people who are bound together in a common fate, and they provide a psychological security in face of the unknown powers that control individual and group destiny.

The fiesta of the patron saint in Vitocota, like those in many other small peasant communities in Latin America, is the central event of the year. People from other villages and from Ayata come to participate. The permanent ties that link people to their place of origin, even when they have gone to live elsewhere, are reflected in the mass return of out-migrants to the village for the fiesta. Many have been working in La Paz, which is located about 16 hours by truck from Vitocota; a few work in tin mines on the Altiplano or in the developing northern and eastern parts of Bolivia. Between 20 and 30 former residents of Vitocota and their children arrive on the evening of July 24, hours before the fiesta begins, having traveled by cargo truck from La Paz.

The Vitocota church.

It is common, especially for young people, to leave peasant villages in Bolivia and other parts of Latin America because they have no land, but this is not a major cause of migration from Vitocota, where families have enough land to provide food for themselves. What is lacking in the Vitocota-Ayata area is work which pays adequate wages. It is often said in Vitocota that there is enough food, but no money.

Vitocotans need money chiefly to assure their status in the community. To some extent status depends on the amount of land, animals, and household objects a family has, but even more essential is the need to fulfill family and community ritual obligations, for weddings or fiestas for example, in appropriate style. Everyone who expects status within the community must at some time assume a major role in sponsoring a fiesta. Clothes, special food, fireworks, alcohol, coca, cigarettes, and decorations can run into hundreds and even thousands of dollars. The quality and quantity of expenditures are openly and critically judged by one's neighbors, with respect and standing rising or falling accordingly. Even individuals who for all practical purposes have moved to some other place secure their prestige in the villages from which they came by agreeing to help sponsor a fiesta.

The woman reported to have been killed in the truck accident was slated to be a fiesta sponsor or *preste*. In her absence, her father assumes her obligations. The *prestes*, of which there are usually four, construct bowers (called *lamares*) near their houses. Apart from the village square, the homes of the *prestes* are the principal centers of drinking, eating, and mutual encounter during the fiesta.

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As the film clearly shows, nearly everyone at the fiesta is extremely drunk. Drinking, along with sucking coca leaves and smoking cigarettes, is a standard means by which the Aymara establish and express relationships, whether at fiestas or less formal occasions. When friends or strangers encounter one another, an offer of coca or alcohol initiates conversation and breaks down barriers. The same practice explains the sacrifices of alcohol and coca to the spirits and their use by the ceremonial participants. The spirits are regarded as similar to human beings in their capacity to enjoy alcohol and coca.

Fiesta celebrants.

The Aymara prepare a special drink for the fiesta called *chicha*, a fermented and not too powerful derivative of corn. They also drink a potent 100 per cent alcohol, which is made from sugar cane and comes in purple tins from Eastern Bolivia. Though the Aymara pride themselves on their capacity to down the fiery pure alcohol, they frequently dilute it for more comfortable drinking. In a fiesta everyone is expected to be at least mildly drunk, and someone who is not has difficulty becoming part of the party and probably would be suspected of being an *evangélico* (Protestant). At the fiesta old friendships are renewed, business is discussed, but with so many people drunk, it is not surprising that the participants in a fiesta express maudlin affection, release pent-up emotions, quarrel often to the point of violence, and engage in lengthy conversations and explanations that drift into incoherence. Individual celebrants periodically withdraw to sleep or rest and then return for more.

The conversation in the church concerning the damage to Santiago reveals several of the numerous currents of tension in the community. The sexton himself had broken the statue while drunk—evidently an accident.* Yet he attempts to place the blame first on schoolchildren and later on the *evangélicos*, objects of suspicion and scorn.** The schoolteacher's fervent defense of the children includes a complaint that the parents not only refuse to exercise sufficient discipline but also deny him authority. "Fathers and mothers should raise their children properly. They are treated like little treasures," he laments. "That is why they misbehave."

The Fiesta of Santiago

The eight days of the fiesta are marked by processions with the statue of the saint and community-wide dancing. The dances and music are of two types, traditional and modern. Music for the traditional dances is supplied by pan-pipes and *quena-quena* flutes and the dancers' costumes are topped by elaborate feather headdresses; the more modern music is played on brass instruments and the dancers wear a variety of costumes, including those of the bulls (which derive from Spanish influence). The Aymara are extremely proud of their costumes and music. In the film, Alejandro Mamani*** leads a group of *chatra* dancers toward the church. Don Alejo, whose position at the head of the dancers is

*He confessed several days later to Manuel Ticona and, because the excitement had died down, he was not in jeopardy.

**There are only a few converts to Protestant beliefs in Vitocota. One *evangélico* makes a speech at the Flag Day ceremonies shown in the film "The Children Know."

***See film/essay "The Spirit Possession of Alejandro Mamani."

honorific, carries a slim metal staff. The dancers' headdresses are composed of many layers of fine bird plumes arranged on stick frames which are tied to their hat crowns. The same few tunes are played continuously through the entire fiesta. Dancing is not well-organized. Though it conforms to general patterns, with attempts to include everyone from time to time, basically small groups get together and dance spontaneously. Men and women dance both with each other and in separate groups.

Several days of the fiesta are decentralized in that activities shift from a central location, usually the village square or church, to individual homes. Relatives, friends, and ritual kin (*compadres*) are invited by a *preste* or other family to eat, drink, and dance. Often other minor ceremonies, such as the first cutting of a child's hair, take place at this time.

The principal event culminating this fiesta season in Vitocota is the ceremony to determine the outcome of the agricultural year. Don Gregorio, the father of the woman presumed dead, is obviously in great sorrow, but he is the principal magician of the town and must conduct the necessary divination, invocations, and offerings.

The first stage of the ceremony occurs during the day. Don Gregorio, followed by his son Manuel Ticona, Miguel (a minor mystic), another man and two women ascend a nearby mountain called Pucara (Fortress) for the preliminary divination. To consult the spirits, they use coca leaves, which have a glossy and a dull side. By dropping the leaves through the fingers, alternative answers to various questions can be determined by looking at the side on which they tend to fall. Don Gregorio asks a series of questions: whether the year will be good, if a sacrifice is desired, whether the rains will come early, and if planting should be done early. The divining is accompanied by ritual consumption of coca and alcohol. Each member of the party makes fans of three or six large and unbroken coca leaves and offers them to the others. The coca leaves are taken into the mouth and chewed only after being waved in front of the forehead, making the sign of the cross. Pure alcohol is sprinkled at the four corners of the "table" or cloth in the center and at the base of the rock cairn which is behind them. Each member of the party also sips some of the alcohol. To their delight, the consultation indicates that the agricultural year will be good.

The group remains on Pucara for about an hour, including the time spent in ritual. After a quiet informal discussion about various aspects of the portents and a lengthy account of one of Miguel's visions, they return to Vitocota. In the village, they go straightaway to the church to begin removing the decorations from Santiago's litter prior to restoring him to the top step of the altar.

Film Dialogue

We still have obligations, father.

You must make the yearly sacrifices. You are a powerful magician.

Manuel Ticona to his father,
Don Gregorio

Film Dialogue

With your permission, ladies and gentlemen. . .

Father, Son and Holy Spirit. . .

God of this stone fortress. . . Gods of our ancestors. . .

May all be well. Do not wish further sufferings for us.

God who inhabits Calvary. . .
Saint of the Stars. . .
King of Sacred Depositories. . .

God of the road's turning. . .
God of Lurisani Peak. . .

. . .

May this year bring good harvests.

May the potato not have blight like last year.

Pachamama, earth mother. . . virgin earth. . . may all be well.

Look after us well. . . may we all have good luck.

King Pucara, Look after us. . .
. . . no more pain or sufferings

Don Gregorio

Beginning around midnight, August 1-2, the sacrifices* are prepared in Gregorio's home. They are placed in several packets of colored paper and divided evenly with care. They include small squares of gold and silver paper, shaved llama fat, scrapings from the edge of a coin, small pink and blue pebbles, miniature carvings of household and other objects, red berries, pure alcohol, and red wine. Don Gregorio pours the alcohol and wine from a scallop shell that comes from the sea. The principal sacrificial item is a llama fetus, which is believed by the Aymara to have a powerful effect on the spirits.

Typically the participants call on a number of spirits, including the Lord of the (agricultural) Year, the ancestral spirits, various place spirits, the guardians of sacred places, and the Christian Trinity. On the assumption that cultivation can be affected by many spirits, the community representatives call on as many as they can remember. There is no set sequence; rather, various participants interrupt and call on spirits that must be taken into consideration.

Again the coca leaves confirm that the harvest will be good, and several times they are consulted concerning the place to make the sacrifice. Repeatedly they point to the mountain top, Pucara, much to the discomfort of those who prefer to stay indoors on a rainy cold night.

On top of the mountain the invocations to various spirits and ceremonial drinking are repeated, as the packets with their objects are burned in the fire. An egg, symbolizing gold, is broken and dropped amid the packets. The llama fetus is sprinkled with alcohol and buried. Miraculously a large moth draws near to the scene, attracted by the light of the lantern. The Aymara, ever conscious of omens, believe that the spirit has come in the form of the moth to receive the sacrifice. Don Gregorio burns and proffers copal to the night sky. Confident that the offerings have been well-received, they descend, persuaded that the year will be very good and that the suffering and bad luck of the previous year will not recur.

In the numerous other Aymara and Quechua-speaking villages around Vitocota, similar ceremonies are held. The divination and omens there also reveal that it would be a good year. Indeed, it was.

*The sacrificial objects are typical of the Aymara, but their origins and symbolic meanings are lost in time.

Film Dialogue

It's a very good sign, isn't it?

This year will be very good!
We won't suffer as before.

Don Gregorio and
others on Pucara

Llamas play an important role in Aymara spiritual practice as well as being beasts of burden and sources of food.

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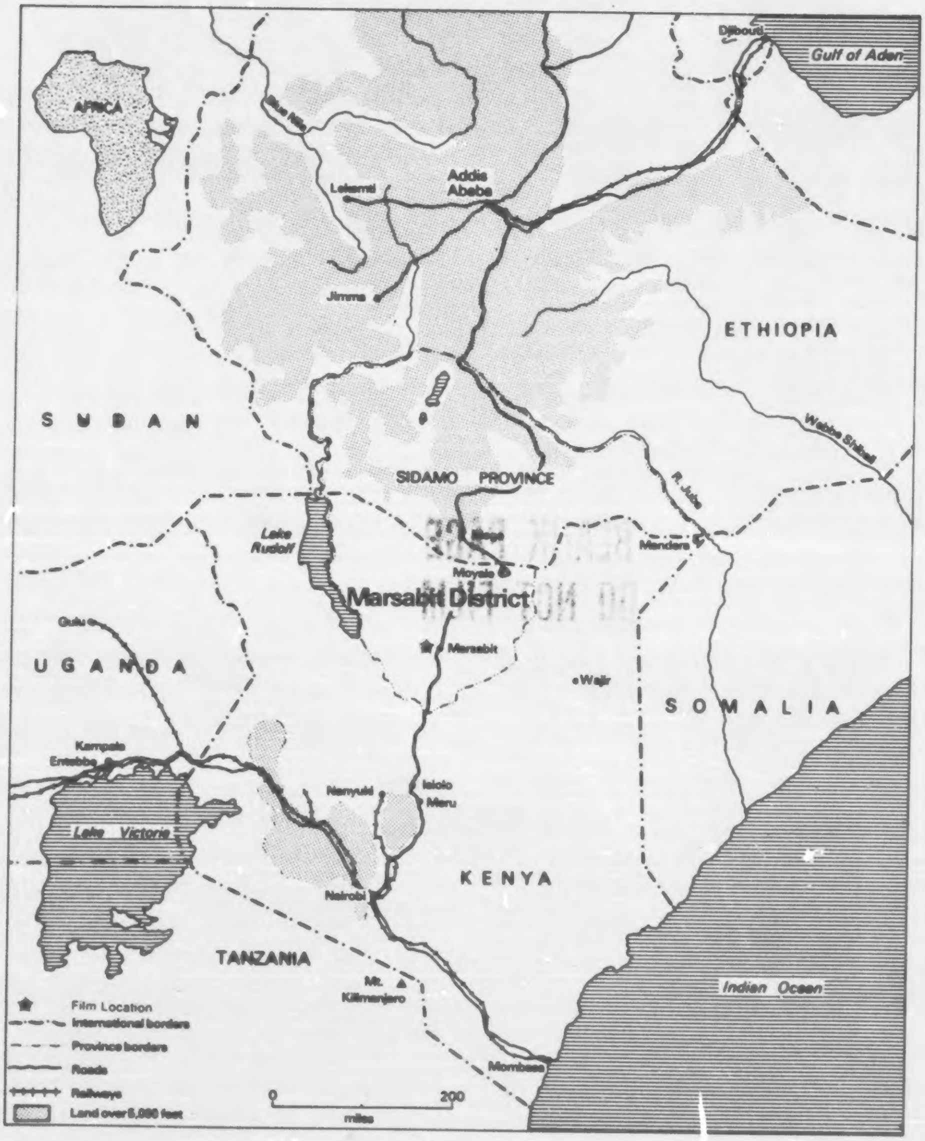
AFRICA
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Gulf of Aden
Blue Nile
Lekemti
Addis Abeba
Jimma
ETHIOPIA
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R. Juba
Lake Rudolf
Mega
Mandera
Moyale
Marsabit District
Gulu
Marsabit
UGANDA
Wajir
SOMALIA
Kampala
Entebbe
Nanyuki
Isiolo
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Mt. Kilimanjaro
Indian Ocean
Mombasa
Film Location
International borders
Province borders
Roads
Railways
Land over 5,000 feet
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KENYA

1

Rural Society

KENYA BORAN I

Flexibility and Change in a Pastoral Society

by ASMAROM LEGESSE

Film Dialogue

In the past, the Boran shifted with their herds between the lowlands and the mountain in search of grass and water.

Recently, many have settled permanently on the mountain.

The new road from Nairobi to Addis Ababa passes directly through Marsabit.

Film Dialogue

I don't think you'll get far with your Swahili *here.*

No, they don't understand it. They may speak a bit of it.

Stand here.
Johnny, ask the chief if they won't sell the bracelets. They are awfully nice, these two bracelets.

Ask the chief because they don't want . . .

No, No . . .
That's the old one. That's got more value. It is a museum object. The new one is not. And the new one is coarse.

How much do you want for this?

Tourists in
Boran country

Pastoral nomadism is an extraordinarily versatile mode of adaptation to marginal ecologies. It is a successful pattern that has allowed human communities to exploit the very meager and unreliable resources of arid environments. Examination of the way of life of the Boran of East Africa suggests that no attempt to modernize their economy is likely to succeed if it limits rather than expands the versatility of their socioecological system.

The Boran are a nomadic people who live in southern Ethiopia and northern Kenya. They are part of the larger Galla or Oromo people of Ethiopia. Like so many African societies that straddle national boundaries, the Boran maintain a dual identity as members of the Kenyan and Ethiopian nations. The Boran tend to view this as a blessing because they can choose the kind of administration they want to live under by simply moving across the border. From the government's point of view, their position is a source of problems because they are often involved in border incidents, they avoid taxation, and they identify with their own group rather than the nation. The Boran are treated as marginal populations by both countries; they do not share fully in national development programs; and they do not take an active part in the administration of their own territory.

In recent years, Boran have begun to send their children to school and to benefit from public services offered by Kenya and Ethiopia. As a result, a process of social change is now under way that will probably transform their way of life and bring them into a more intimate relationship with the wider economic and political networks.

Nomadic-Sedentary Interaction

In addition to the extraneous forces of national government, the other area in which Boran feel external influence is in their relationship with neighboring nomadic and sedentary populations. Their relationships with such peoples as the Hamar, Arsi, and Somali is generally competitive and hostile, whereas their ties with the Konso, Wata, and Gabbra are usually cooperative and peaceful. The basis of these two very different patterns of relating to their neighbors is primarily ecological and economic. The Wata are hunters and until recently they did not keep any livestock. The Konso are farmers and artisans and have little interest in cattle herding. These two populations pose no threats to Boran. Quite the contrary, the Konso furnish them with manufactured household goods and ritual equipment, whereas the Wata consistently

Konso iron worker.

come to their assistance in time of severe drought by providing them with game meat. Boran reciprocate by giving the Konso a special place in their rituals and by setting aside beef for the Wata whenever they sacrifice livestock.

The Boran attitude toward Arsi, Somali, and Hamar—all pastoral nomads in competition for the same scarce resources that the Boran need—is warlike except in the specific context of marketplaces. Along their borders there is continual raiding of cattle and occasional shifting of boundaries. These border activities, which are a source of friction with district administrations, are an integral part of the adaptive maneuvers that pastoralists have evolved over the centuries. Simply stated, this means that overpopulated nomadic communities expand at the expense of less densely populated regions. Conversely, understocked regions siphon off surplus livestock by raiding and this tends to re-establish the balance. The tension existing along the Boran-Somali border for almost a century is illustrative.

The Somali have steadily expanded at the expense of the Boran,* in large part as a result of very different strategies of ecological adaptation: whenever there is a drought, the cattle-herding Boran have been forced to move in a generally westerly direction, and the camel- and goat-herding Somali move into the abandoned territory. Somali livestock can survive in the pastures Boran consider inadequate for their cattle. Since camels and goats are browsers and can live on thornbush, they give their owners a distinct advantage under very arid conditions. After one or two seasons have elapsed, the Boran find it virtually impossible to return to their former grazing ground because the land is, by Boran standards, perpetually overgrazed.

Differences in institutions affecting demographic growth have also favored Somali expansion. The central social and political institution of the Boran—the *gada* system—is so organized that men are barred from marrying until they reach their 32nd year. Theoretically this imposes a severe constraint on the population, and depending on death rates and birthrates, the population either barely maintains itself or declines. These rigid restrictions were introduced in Boran in the sixteenth century at a time when the population was growing very rapidly and are still formally in effect. Today the Boran population appears to be in a state of equilibrium.**

The Somali situation is quite different. They have no strong institutionalized constraints on population growth and there is ample evidence that their livestock population has been growing in tandem with the human population.*** The danger of overstocking and overgrazing is great and unless there is a vigorously enforced policy of periodic destocking, the Somali population must, sooner or later, face the consequences of ecological degradation. This seems to be the force behind the historic southward movement of populations across the Kenya border.

*There is documentary and linguistic evidence indicating that the Boran boundary was approximately 675 kilometers northeast of the present position (Legesse 1973:15). The vast triangular area between Dolo, Negelli, and Moyale that was formerly part of Boranland and is now occupied by the Somalis is approximately 2,700 square kilometers.

**In the 1950s, the animal population seemed to be in decline. Ethiopian surveys indicated that the death rate among immature livestock was so high that the general livestock population was probably not maintaining itself (Church, Pope and Standford 1957). Subsequent vaccination campaigns have limited the impact of bovine epidemics; hence, it is likely that the livestock population has stabilized or increased slightly.

***As early as 1961, Lewis reported that the size of family herds among Somali nomads had reached 277 sheep equivalents per household, nearly three times the size of Boran family herds, which average about 100 sheep equivalents (Lewis 1961; Legesse 1975). For purposes of comparison we have assumed that two sheep are the equivalent of one head of cattle or one camel and that goats and sheep have equal value in terms of water-pasture requirement and food yield.

Gabbra women at a desert well.

* * * * *

The Boran have developed a whole range of ethical, ecological, social, political, and economic institutions that enable them to lead a tolerable existence in spite of periodic food shortages. Their entire sociopolitical system is so flexible that it allows them to circumvent all but the most extreme droughts and to rehabilitate their communities and herds after every disaster.

The Herdsman's Ethic

The ethical adaptation of the nomad is very striking. Approaching a Boran hut, one first notices there is no door, no obstruction to cordon the family into a private world. Unlike the fortress-like structures that are common among peasant farmers, the Boran camp and hut are wide open. Total strangers can walk into the hut and take part in the family meals and fireside conversations. Food is readily shared with neighbors and strangers alike, and the family's food supply is always well known. (It would in fact be difficult to be secretive about the food when the milk cows are all around the hut and the calves tethered around the family hearth.)

This philosophy of sharing and the associated openness of communication pervade all Boran life. It is possible to approach any Boran and find out his name, lineage, clan, the location of his herds, his movement in recent months, his knowledge about the state of the land, about rainfall, water resources and pastures. Among the wide-ranging nomads, a family often does not know exactly where its herds are, where most members of the extended family are spending the season, what part of the country has had recent rain, which wells are productive and which ones have dried up. Boran are constantly asking questions about these vital matters of any and all newcomers to the camp. It would be inconceivable for a Boran to withhold or falsify such vital information. Openness is an essential feature of their socioecological system: there must be a continual flow of reliable information if they are to make intelligent decisions in their perpetual search for pastures and water.

Cattle Herding and the Pastoral Ecology

Boran are devoted to their cattle and like many of the cattle-herding populations of eastern Africa, they attach much greater value to cattle than to other types of livestock. They do keep some camels, sheep, and goats, but there is nothing sentimental or ritual in the way they relate to these animals. Man and his cattle are believed to have been created at the same time, whereas the other animals are relegated to a lesser position in mythology.

> At the time when God first gave birth to man, cattle emerged from the roots of the Gambela tree, because man asked God, "You have given birth to me, what then shall I live on?" and God answered, "I have given you cattle; milk them and nourish yourself; slaughter them and eat their meat." Man first learned to milk his cattle and he then learned to eat their meat. Only later did he learn to drink their blood.

Boran name their cattle individually and can trace their pedigrees with ease. No marriage can be conducted without cattle exchange. No important ceremony can be conducted without cattle sacrifice. Cattle are central to their social system. By contrast, sheep and goats are referred to as *jiijirti* or "small change"—the kind of animal one takes to the marketplace to raise small amounts of cash needed for the purchase of tobacco, coffee, utensils, and other household items. Cattle are an object of aesthetic contemplation; other stock are raised for purely pragmatic reasons.

Grazing animals—cattle and sheep—are entirely dependent on grass; browsing animals—camels and goats—can feed on thornbush and easily survive minor droughts that destroy the grass cover. Mixing these two types of stock in *varying proportions* allows the nomad to exploit a much wider range of environments than he can if he is totally dependent on cattle. Boran have such an extreme cultural bias in their attitudes toward livestock that their herds are almost exclusively made up of grazing animals and they are therefore much more vulnerable to ecological stress.* The fact that they milk only their cattle and limit the use of their few sheep and goats to an occasional source of meat and cash limits their adaptive potential considerably. Similarly, Boran rarely keep camels and when they do, use them only as draught animals, mainly when they are moving from one area to another or carrying large food supplies for important ceremonies. As such these hardy animals contribute significantly to their transportation needs but add nothing to their food resources.

The most critical fact about the pastoral ecology is its extraordinary fragility. Boran are almost entirely dependent on the dairy products of their cattle. Their principal source of food is milk and some dairy products such as butter and sour milk. There are occasionally supplements of meat which become available on ceremonial occasions, and of grains which they sometimes purchase from neighboring agricultural populations. This extreme dependence on milk means that the staple food cannot be stored effectively. Milk is available only if an adequate proportion of cows are lactating, if there is enough pasture, if there is a good supply of water, and if the distance between the water and the pastures is not excessive. In this precarious system of food production, there are far too many things that can go wrong. As a result, the nomadic families often experience seasonal hunger.

Traditional Social and Political Life

Boran have a very flexible sociopolitical system that is adapted to their semi-arid environment. Their local communities consist of a few families that have come together for the duration of a single season. There is no permanent residential group held together by perpetual bonds of kinship and neighborhood. Families come together and drift apart with great ease. Indeed the families that have settled together for one season do not necessarily spend the entire season together; if some families do not get along with their neighbors, they will dismantle the hut, carry the frame to another site, and build a new homestead and kraal. In this respect the Boran nomad is very different from the settled village communities of farmers where people are born, grow up, marry, raise children, grow old, and die in the same village, or in two or three adjoining communities. The Boran spends his entire life drifting over a vast territory; his network of friendships is very wide, diffuse, and often superficial.

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*Pastoral peoples such as the Turkana and Somali vary the proportions of sheep, goats, camels, and cattle in their herds so as to make more efficient use of their ecological resources.

The Boran camp is one of the most ephemeral types of settlement that one can find in semi-arid regions. They build a hut of thornbush and acacia branches and cover the frame with well-tanned skins. If the family intends to stay in one place for the duration of a season, then the frame is covered with more thatch, although it is often so thin that the flat roof must be reinforced with animal skins to protect the family from rain. When the family is moving camp, the entire complex of poles, frame, thatch, and skins can be dismantled, transported, and reassembled in one day.* When the family makes longer treks, however, the structure is abandoned, never to be used again. The family takes only the skins and the household equipment. Usually the entire contents of a medium-sized household can be loaded on a single camel.

Not only the physical structure of the camp and the hut but also the political organization of the local community is highly flexible. Each camp has one leader known as *abba olla* whose prime responsibility is to call together meetings of the council of elders. With their advice he maintains order in the camp. Cases of cattle theft, misuse of pastures, wells, ponds, and dams, and domestic conflict are among the most common problems that the *abba olla* in council must resolve. The important point, however, is not the peculiarities of local politics but the flexibility of the leadership structure. The basic provision that allows Boran to effect frequent and smooth changes in leadership is the principle of seniority. Any two individuals who decide to camp together can determine their relative seniority by identifying their respective lineages, the relative rank of their families, and their individual positions among their siblings. Whatever the characteristics of the *ad hoc* community that has come together for one season, there is a universal Boran procedure for the selection of the camp leader. The most senior person (in terms of lineage, and not necessarily the oldest) automatically assumes the position of *abba olla*. Should the individual who had held that position during the early part of a season pack up his belongings and move to another camp, his successor is selected on the same principle of seniority from among the remaining families.

This highly flexible social and political system gives the nomads maximum freedom in their search for pastures and water for the livestock. Boran say that the well, not the hut, is the home. By this they mean that the particular place where one has decided to camp at any given time is of little importance. The only permanent feature of life is the well. Every year, when the temporary water sources dry up, the Boran herdsman returns to his ancestral well. The only geographical feature that the Boran nomad is attached to is one of the deep, permanent wells (*tula*) owned by his lineage. All Boran who can trace descent to the founder of the well have perpetual and inalienable right of access to the water. If the well caves in, the lineage is collectively responsible for its maintenance. The re-excavation of a well can be a massive undertaking that might take several months to complete. The lineage as a whole

*Boran huts are not quite as portable as the tent-like, frame-and-mat structures that one finds among the Somali and Gabbra nomads.

has the obligation to organize the laborers and to sacrifice livestock to feed them through the period of excavation.

The overseer of the well is known as *abba hirrega*, or *abba ela*. He is selected in accordance with the same rules that govern the selection of camp headmen. At any given time, the office of well overseer is held by the most senior male member of the lineage that owns the well. In the absence of that individual, the next most senior man automatically occupies the office. The controller of the well has the authority to assign the family herds a position in the three-day watering cycle. He can also exclude criminals and offenders who have not come to terms with the local councils from access to the well. This penalty is considered to be so extreme, however, that Boran rarely need to resort to it, the threat alone being sufficient deterrent.

The well is the focus of activity and a center of communication which is as critical as the marketplace. Kinsmen and friends who have not seen each other for months or years meet when they camp near their ancestral wells. At the height of the dry season a vast but diffuse agglomeration of camps develops around each of the major well complexes of Boranland. This is a time of seasonal famine when the supply of milk is not adequate to feed all the members of the family and the need for cooperation is greatest. The pastures are not enough to support all the livestock and the water is not enough for human and animal consumption. The communities adjust to this period of stress by undergoing various critical changes in their internal organization. Large camps break up into small camps; the size of the local communities declines

Film Dialogue

Come, let us progress.

Remember, we are asking the government . . .

. . . to help us get water . . .

. . . to help us with cattle, with farms, with schools.

That's how the world is now.

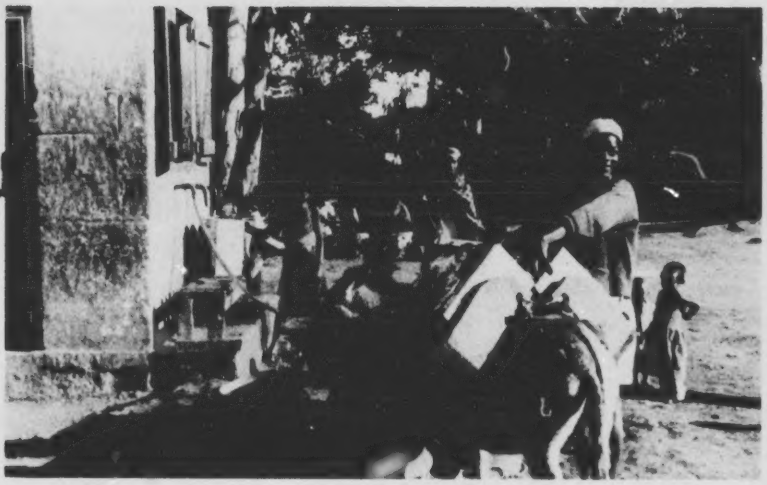
You can no longer sit back and say:

"I have cattle, and so I am rich!"

You are no longer respected just because you are old.

Chief Jilo Turkena

Water is lifted by hand from the well



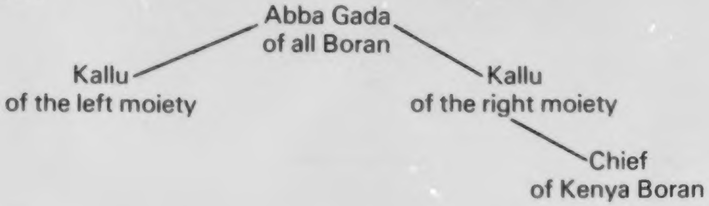
Unlike the temporary *fora* wells, village watering places like the one in Marsabit town have taps for easy filling.

from an average of about eight families to an average of about four or five. The family itself also breaks up; women, children, and the aged remain in the vicinity of the wells with a few milch cows necessary for their subsistence. The rest of the herd is taken by the young adults and adolescents to the river valleys, the area that Boran consider to be the untamed wilderness. The river valleys, where malaria is endemic, are also infested with various forms of insect and animal life that is dangerous to cattle and to the herdsmen. At the same time, however, these areas have a virtually inexhaustible supply of water. The part of the herd that is sent to the river valleys or to other temporary camps is known as the *fora*.

Around all the well complexes and along all the rivers in Boranland, there is a strip of land which is completely devoid of vegetation, having been grazed, browsed, and trampled by livestock as they travel every three days to and from the sources of water. These pockets of "desertification" are normally small enough not to interfere with the grazing-watering cycles. Nevertheless, Boran must constantly regulate the use of pastures so that the herds do not graze too close to the sources of water or to the camp pastures that are reserved for milch cows and juvenile livestock. They must also see that the *fora* cattle which are supposed to graze in the wilderness do not crowd the family herds in the vicinity of the wells and camps.

There are thus three categories of cattle in the dry season which must be adequately spaced from each other and in relation to the available resources. The ratio of the three in a given area, the distance between wells, camps, and river valleys, and the proportion of browsing and grazing animals in the herds are all important factors in the preservation of the ecological balance. Boran leaders must be constantly on the alert to prevent overstocking, overgrazing, and mismangement of resources. This is the most important responsibility of the village headmen and well overseers.

Above the level of the local settlement, Boran have three different institutions. One is the hereditary office of ritual leaders known as Kallu. The second is the elective office of political leaders known as Abba Gada. The third, which is peculiar to the Kenya Boran only, is the chieftaincy—an institution that developed in British colonial times. The chief is an administrative officer selected by the Boran and appointed by the District Commissioner. The office resembles the Kalluship in that it is held for an indefinite period of time. Both Kallu and chief also share the characteristic of having permanent residences: they do not move their homesteads seasonally from one encampment to another. Thus, the structure of Boran leadership can be represented as follows:



There is one Kallu at the head of each tribal half or moiety. His primary task is to perform the most important pan-Boran rituals and to oversee the election of all *gada* leaders including the Abba Gada. By contrast, the Abba Gada's authority extends, at least in theory, over all Boranland, but his term of office is limited to a fixed period of eight years.

The fact that the Kallu and the chief hold their offices for indefinite periods is a source of considerable stress in Boran social life. Indefinite tenure and residential immobility are permanent arrangements that do not fit in with the flexibility reflected throughout the rest of the social system. As would be expected, the Kallu's settlement is not economically viable. He and his followers subsist largely by extracting tribute from the economically productive population. This is a source of friction because they must exert considerable pressure to secure the tribute. Similarly, the chief's settlement depends on sources that are extraneous to the traditional economy, i.e., urban trade and employment. The chief himself is of course a salaried official whose income derives ultimately from taxation.

These leaders and their respective communities deviate from the pastoral nomadic society not only economically but also in outlook and conduct. They tend to be somewhat authoritarian in character, secretive in their manner of communication, and highly possessive in their attitude toward property. In short, their conduct and their very life style violate the herdsman's ethic. It is therefore not surprising that the nomadic Boran have very complicated and ambivalent attitudes toward them. Sometimes they think of the Kallu as an insignificant ritual elder and at other

Film Dialogue

I hold this meeting for Progress!

Progress for citizens.

You are the citizens.

Listen, you citizens!

There are stupid people who can't even open a door.

There are stupid people who don't know how to make babies.

But even these stupid people are your countrymen.

You people, your country is Kenya.

"Kenya" is only a name.

But saying "Kenya" means your country.

Because you were born here.

Chief Jilo Turkena

Film Dialogue

Listen! You Boran are the only Kenyans who haven't paid your taxes.

We chiefs have been asked to give you warning.

You people . . . you are the worst at paying taxes.

Chief Jilo Turkena

times they refer to him as a kind of king (*moti*). Similarly, the chief is sometimes viewed as a respected elder and at other times as the local extension of a remote political establishment.

To ensure a certain degree of accountability from these permanent leaders, Boran society puts them under various supernatural and ritual constraints. Since the secular political arrangement grants them indefinite tenure, Boran must invoke supernatural forces to remove them from office if and when they are judged unfit for the role. Traditionally this was done by throwing the incompetent man out of office on the occasion of some natural disaster such as drought or epidemic or forcing his abdication after witnessing ominous signs, such as eclipses, that are believed to herald a catastrophe. There is ample evidence indicating that at least three Kallus were thus removed in recent history. In fact, Chief Jilo Tukena, who figures prominently in the Kenya Boran film—met with the same fate after the filming was completed. He was removed from office on July 1, 1973, one day after a total solar eclipse occurred in Marsabit (Legesse 1974).* A long career was thus abruptly terminated the day after "the sun died." Another chief was promptly selected by the elders and installed into office by the district commissioner.

Chieftaincy has come to assume progressively more central position in the life of the Kenya Boran. It has become an important link with the modern system of local administration. However, the traditional system of government which is still fully operative among the northern Boran is based not on chieftaincy but the *gada* system (Legesse 1963, 1973). The nomadic Boran are organized as *gada* classes or, loosely speaking, "age groups" that assume political power successively. There are some ten stages of initiation, including the *hariya* initiation shown in the film, through which all Boran males must pass in their lifetime. At one of these stages, known as *gada*, the group in power elects an Abba Gada and assumes a position of authority vis-à-vis the rest of the nomadic society. They remain in power for eight years and at the end of that period they formally relinquish power to a younger group.

The Abba Gada and his followers do not remain stationary but travel every year along a ritually prescribed course. They nomadize to an even greater extent than the rest of the population. During their eight-year term of office, they are required to cover a very large orbit that spans Boranland from one end to the other and goes through all the major shrines and sacred places (*arda jila*) recognized by the Boran. Thus, they come into contact with all segments of Boran society and can adjudicate any cases of conflict that local councils have failed to resolve. Boran know in what part of the country their leaders will be at any given time and they are, therefore, able to join them, to offer them tribute, and to assist them in their ritual and political activities.

FILM LINK

The Hariya ceremony in the film shows young men of the same age demonstrating their loyalty and bravery:

> Shouting is the sign of war
> White hair is the sign of old age
> When we hear the enemies approaching . . .
> . . . cowards among them shall be quaking
> We will help each other and defeat the enemy.

Hariya refers to a grouping of males, usually between 16 and 18 years of age, who organize themselves for mutual help and friendship. The Hariya ceremony establishes a male's status as well as identifying those within the age set who will assist one another in watering stock, hunting, sharing personal property, and participate as dance mates on ritual occasions. Only after a young man has completed the Hariya is he considered eligible to make serious overtures to women, to hunt and kill lions, to engage in warfare, and to join raiding parties.

Identification with the Hariya age-set persists throughout life, but is different from belonging to a descent group. A man's Hariya forms bonds of mutual aid and friendship. His descent group meets for moral, religious, and judicial purposes. The values of the age-set are fierceness, virility, and friendship—as demonstrated in the film—while those of the descent group are peace, passivity, and reasonableness.

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*Chief Jilo himself states that he retired from office after serving twenty years.

The Abba Gada and his councillors form a large settlement consisting of several hundred individuals. This camp—known as *olla arbora*—is far larger in size than the normal camps. It is the "mobile capital" of Boranland. While it is economically self-sufficient on the whole, it is too large an agglomeration of households to be sustained fully by the limited pastoral resources of any one region. They must, therefore, supplement their food production with some tribute obtained from the population. Furthermore, if they are to have adequate access to pastures and water, they must maintain a much wider nomadic orbit than the rest of the population and must move camp more frequently. This they do with the assistance of all the local communities through whose territory they travel.

On the occasion of the largest Boran ceremonies that draw several thousand people to the Abba Gada camp, rigorous control must be maintained over the concentration of livestock around the shrines. For two or three weeks before the onset of the ceremony, all Boran are barred from camping within a two- or three-mile radius of the shrine, a restricted perimeter known as *laf dawa*. A week or so before the ceremony, people who have come with large supplies of sour milk are allowed into the restricted area. A few days before the ceremony, the remaining families and their herds are allowed to camp around the shrine. The entire complex of camps must disperse immediately after the ceremony. This procedure is followed in regard to any center around which Boran must aggregate temporarily for any reason—political, ritual, or economic. Whatever their conscious reasons may be for following this procedure, the practical consequence is that it reduces the possibility of rendering the land permanently uninhabitable by denuding the vegetation cover.

SUDAN
ETHIOPIA
CONGO
Lake Rudolf
KENYA
SOMALI REPUBLIC
UGANDA
Lake Victoria
RWANDA
BURUNDI
TANZANIA
INDIAN OCEAN
AFRICA
MOZAMBIQUE

Map of East Africa

Ecological Adaptation: Flexibility

Why is it necessary for the Boran to maintain such a high level of versatility in the structure of their society? Why do they so adamantly resist the well-meaning attempts to sedentarize them and transform them into rustic peasants? We have just observed that flexibility is an important feature of Boran social organization and ecological adaptation. It may be useful to sum up these characteristics systematically.

(1) Boran *drift across international and district borders* to seek refuge from oppressive administrative practices or to benefit from particular public services.

(2) Boran cooperate with tribal groups whose economy complements their own; they are hostile toward those who compete for the same pastoral resources as themselves. In crisis situations such as droughts, epidemics, and famines, the Boran rely on their friendly neighbors for support. Between them and their adversaries, however, there is a predatory relationship and a system of

shifting boundaries: overpopulated communities expand at the expense of the underpopulated tribal area. Conversely, livestock are "redistributed" through *raiding*. This practice tends to remove livestock from the heavily stocked areas and thus contributes to maintenance of the ecological balance.

(3) The herdsman's ethic places a high value on truthfulness, and *openness of communication.* These cultural characteristics are a necessary feature of the pastoral nomadic adjustment. One must have a constant supply of reliable information about rainfall and water resources in order to organize the nomadic orbit effectively.

(4) The political system at each level has the potential to adapt to continual change. The Boran have accomplished this by maintaining high *mobility in the structure of their government*, through their preference for periodically elected rather than hereditary government, their requirement that the leaders rotate along a prescribed course throughout their eight-year term of office, and their provision for automatic succession by seniority.

Film Dialogue

We all know and trust each other.

I have no job.

You know how small my family is.

No close relative has a job.

Elder at Chief's
tax collecting meeting

(5) Boran show a generally nonpossessive attitude toward all forms of property and this facilitates *sharing and redistribution* of scarce resources in their daily lives, in times of seasonal famine, and in the more devastating disasters that occur once or twice in each generation, such as the recent famine (1974-75). They share their livestock, their homes, their pastures, their wells, their wives, and even their children. No kinsman is allowed to become destitute, and if his herd declines below a certain minimum his clan will come together to restock his herd. No visitor is turned away from the Boran camp or denied a meal. Except criminals, no nomads are turned away from pastures or wells—subject, of course, to the rules of seniority and equitable distribution. No man or woman who has reached the appropriate grade in the life cycle is allowed to live without a sexual partner. The institution of cicisbean unions (*garayyu*) provides for liaisons between married women, widows, and divorcees on the one hand and single men on the other. No married couple is allowed to remain childless. Those who have more children than they need will readily offer their younger offspring for adoption by the childless families.

In short, the success of the nomadic and semi-nomadic adjustment to arid and semi-arid conditions lies in the fact that it is an extraordinarily flexible pattern of ecological adaptation.

Ecological Adaptation: Limitations

Not all aspects of the Boran social and economic systems are equally responsive to their fluctuating ecological demands. At least four features of the socioeconomic system appear to run counter to effective ecological adaptation: the composition of herds; the division of labor by sex; the age-grade organization; and techniques of population control.

Herd Composition. Many African pastoralists adapt to their precarious environment by varying the proportions of different types of livestock, particularly the ratio of browsers to grazers; but Boran herds are made up almost entirely of cattle. Their economy is less diversified and more vulnerable than the pastoral economies of their more successful neighbors such as Turkana, and Somali.

Division of Labor by Sex. The division of work roles between males and females is so sharp that it causes many problems. All house construction, processing of dairy products, and manufacturing of leather goods is the work of women. Wood carving, cattle herding, watering of livestock as well as ritual, political, and military activities are left to the men. The roles always remain sharply segregated, even in times of drought, for instance, when it would be useful to mobilize the entire family work force to exploit alternative avenues of food production such as food gathering, hunting, and fishing.

Age Organization. The specialization of age groups is similarly inflexible. For a major part of the life cycle—from the junior warrior grade until retirement—men are barred from herding cattle. Only youths are allowed to do the actual herding and adults supervise their performance from some distance. When the extended family is too small or when epidemics kill part of the work force, the economy suffers because people cannot readily be switched from one job to another.

Population Control. The Boran have attempted to regulate population growth within the framework of their age organization (*gada*), imposing severe restrictions on age of marriage and child bearing. These rules were first introduced in the sixteenth century, when the population was growing very rapidly, but today, the population is barely holding steady and in some parts it seems to have actually begun to decline. Nonetheless, the old rules are still in force long after the conditions that brought them into being have ceased.

Modernization and Social Change

During the last four decades, a small number of urban agglomerations have developed in Boranland that have begun to influence the pastoral population. The main towns are Marsabit in Kenya and Yavello and Negelli in Ethiopia.Boran never constitute a majority of the urban inhabitants and fully urbanized Boran form an extremely small percentage of the towns' populations, rarely over 5 per cent.

The more significant type of urbanization that is taking place is in the form of *peri-urban settlement*. There is a large complex of

Population estimates for the Boran are guesses at best. People on both sides of the border have always feared enumeration because of possible taxes or enforced de-stocking campaigns. Migrations back and forth across the border make enumeration efforts even more haphazard.

Population Estimates as of January 1975

	KENYA Marsabit District	ETHIOPIA, Sidamo Province
Boran	15,050	100,000
Gabbra	17,474	4,000
Rendille	19,455	2,100
Sakuwe	800	2,600
Somali	1,200	800
Gurreh	600	2,650
Ndongdea	100	1,800
Turkana	1,186	400
Other	2,135	500
	58,001	114,850

The last official Kenya census (1970) gave the density of one person per square kilometer as compared to 19 people per square kilometer for Kenya as a whole. The main settlements are around Marsabit Mountain (about 6,000), the Sololo-Moyale area, Kaisut, Maikona, Mount Kulal, and along Lake Rudolf. In Ethiopia settlement is near Moyale (about 1,200), Mega (about 2,000), Arero, Negelli and Yavello.

Marsabit shoemaker.

more or less permanent settlements just outside Marsabit town. The residents of these communities are in close contact with the district administration, urban trade, and the urban labor market. The chief of the Kenya Boran—Jilo Tukena—lives in this area, as do most of the Boran students in the urban schools. These peri-urban communities serve as conduits for diffusing innovations from the city to rural areas and as an intermediate way station for migrants who have abandoned pastoralism and are on their way to urban residence and employment.

Unlike their more nomadic kinsmen, the peri-urban Boran have begun to sell their excess livestock routinely in the urban market. This is not entirely unexpected because the free ranging nomads also sell stock occasionally in the rural markets to meet their ceremonial needs and domestic crises. However, the innovations that are totally unexpected and quite contrary to traditional norms have to do with the introduction of grain farming and the sale of labor. Historically, the nomads had nothing but contempt for the tillers of the soil—an activity that appeared to them particularly degrading. Today, corn is widely grown by the Marsabit Boran, and it has come to be an important supplement to their milk and meat diet. Similarly, the construction of the Addis Ababa-Nairobi road has furnished the peri-urban population with job opportunities which they are progressively beginning to exploit. As a result, they have a much larger cash income than their nomadic counterparts and have begun to accumulate more substantial household goods. The principal reason why they need to raise cash is to pay their taxes, to cover school fees for their children, and to buy a few essentials from the marketplace. The peri-urban Boran have not given up their pastoral activities entirely. They still keep fairly large herds of cattle in distant pastures and some livestock on and around Marsabit mountain. Nevertheless, they have come to see the town as an integral part of their life. Their subsistence activities have become less autonomous and more closely integrated into the wider market economy.

Over and above the more or less spontaneous process of urbanization, the nomad is also subject to more deliberate programs of social change. In attempting to improve the lot of pastoral nomads, African national governments have introduced various projects of partial or total sedentarization,* improved techniques of stock breeding and food production, herd culling, marketing, and population control. Some of these programs are relevant and effective; others are futile and tend to collapse as soon as the agents of change have left the scene. It is, for instance, surprising to learn that the Kenya government has introduced a "family planning program" and has attempted to persuade the nomadic Boran family to limit the size of their families. The program is not likely to have any acceptance among the nomads because it serves no immediately useful purpose. At the present transitional stage, the nomads feel that they must have *larger* families if they are to cope with herding, farming, and urban life. Furthermore, if—as

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*Some attempts have also been made to partially sedentarize the Boran pastoralists in Ethiopia. In a vast area (100 x 100 kilometers) to the east of Yavello town, the government has launched a range management program. An extensive hydrological survey was conducted and several very large reservoirs were excavated that have greatly increased the water resources of the pastoralists. The project has also brought much of the pastureland that was formerly unusable because of lack of water within their reach. Many Boran did, in the early stages, participate actively in the program. They began using the new pastures in controlled cycles so that no sector would be overgrazed and no area would be left ungrazed longer than necessary. However, as the drought intensified in 1973-74 and some of the newly excavated reservoirs dried up, many Boran herdsmen returned to their ancestral wells and their wide-ranging nomadic habits. So far, the program has had little success because the new system does not have sufficient latitude to accommodate the great variations in climate that occur from year to year, from decade to decade.

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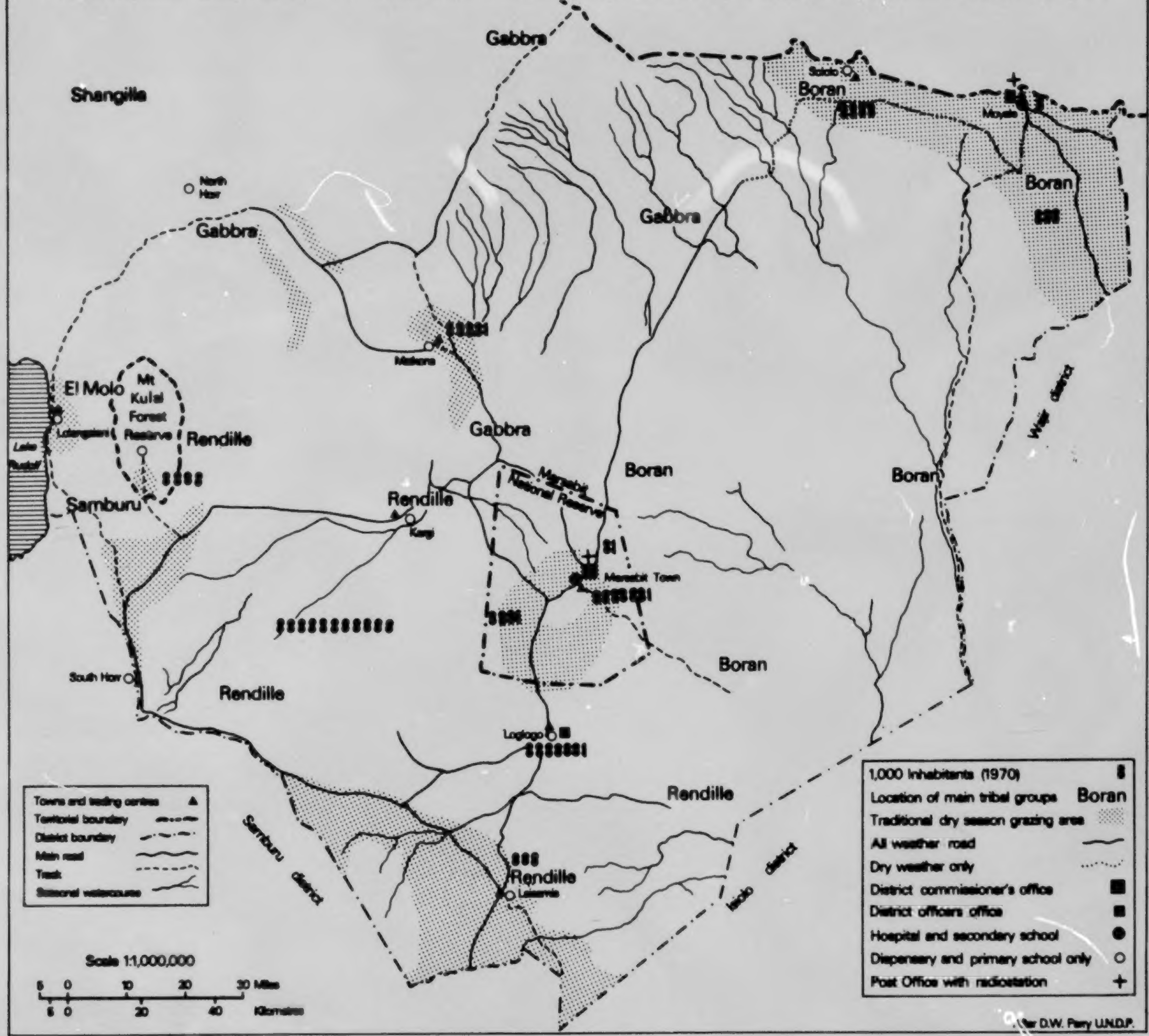
MARSABIT DISTRICT – SURVEY AREA, POPULATION AND INFRASTRUCTURES


Gabbra
Shangille
Sololo
Boran
Moyale
North Horr
Gabbra
Gabbra
Boran
Maikona
El Molo
Mt Kulal Forest Reserve
Loiyangalani
Lake Rudolf
Rendille
Gabbra
Samburu
Rendille
Kargi
Marsabit National Reserve
Boran
Boran
Wajir district
Marsabit Town
Boran
South Horr
Rendille
Logologo
Rendille
Rendille
Laisamis
Samburu district
Isiolo district
Towns and trading centres ▲
Territorial boundary
District boundary
Main road
Track
Seasonal watercourse
Scale 1:1,000,000
5 0 10 20 30 Miles
5 0 20 40 Kilometres
1,000 Inhabitants (1970)
Location of main tribal groups Boran
Traditional dry season grazing area
All weather road
Dry weather only
District commissioner's office ■
District officers office ■
Hospital and secondary school ●
Dispensary and primary school only ○
Post Office with radiostation +

After D.W. Perry U.N.D.P.

our data suggest—the population as a whole is *declining*, the attempted introduction of family planning is truly irrelevant and counterproductive.

By far the most laborious aspect of the work of the pastoralist is the watering of his herds every three days. Boran expend a great deal of energy on this chore. Some attempts have been made in Kenya and in Ethiopia to cut down the nomads' heavy labor investment by introducing mechanical pumps at some of the old and new well sites. At present Boran do not have enough technical training to maintain the pumps and they tend to return to their old method of drawing water manually as soon as the pump

Film Dialogue

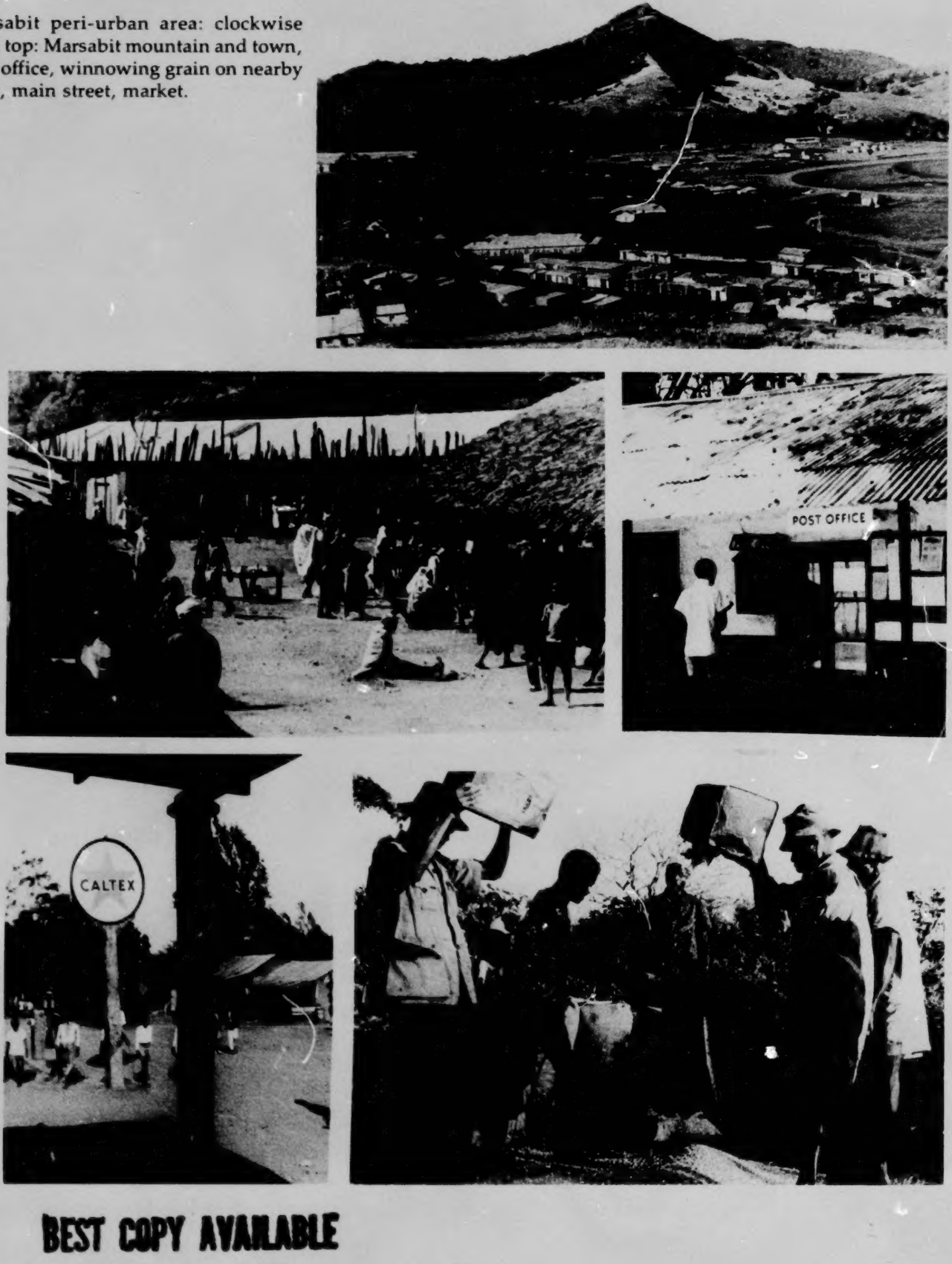
The machine is badly made. That's why it doesn't work.

We'd better draw water by hand.

We can't complain. We didn't ask for this thing.

Draw water boys. Draw water. Don't depend on that pipe.

Marsabit peri-urban area: clockwise from top: Marsabit mountain and town, post office, winnowing grain on nearby farm, main street, market.


POST OFFICE
CALTEX

fails. In a few places, government workers or missionaries do maintain the pumps. With the expansion of practical education this type of intermediate technology should be incorporated more effectively into their agricultural economy.

The nomadic Boran are quite receptive to certain innovations that demonstrably benefit their cattle without entailing any real or apparent reduction in the safety margin of their economy. They have, for instance, welcomed the veterinary services and vaccination campaigns introduced by the governments of Kenya and Ethiopia. They eagerly drive their herds of cattle great distances to take them to the vaccination centers. This kind of innovation does not upset their traditional institutions and therefore is readily accepted. Other aspects of modernization such as the integration of the nomad into national institutions, are more difficult and complicated.

The process of absorbing the Boran of northern Kenya into the national framework is still at an early stage, compared to Ethiopia.* There are hardly any Boran in local administration in Kenya. Most of the men in the district offices come to their posts via Nairobi and tend to be of central highland origin. Not surprisingly, the nomads view the district officialdom as an alien establishment. This is partly a function of the fact that Kenya has existed as an independent nation for a much shorter period than Ethiopia and the vigorous programs of national integration, such as the indoctrination exercises reflected in *Harambee* celebrations, have been launched relatively recently.

Other aspects of modernization have proceeded much faster in Kenya than in Ethiopia. These processes are gradually transforming the life style and economy of the pastoralists. Among these the most important single fact is that the educational system has begun to play a more dominant role, particularly for those Boran who have settled near urban areas. Unlike the nomads, residents in these peri-urban communities make great sacrifices to send as many children as they can to school. This involves some careful reckoning in labor arithmetic: how many children can they send to school without disrupting their herding activities? Which child is to be educated and which deprived?** Will the educated child give any assistance to his rural kin after he has secured a job and established residence in town? These are paramount questions in the minds of Boran parents who have been exposed to the forces of modernization.

The full impact of these processes of modernization—education, controlled grazing, range management, sedentarization, urbanization, national integration—cannot be adequately assessed at the present, early stage, although some of these processes will be examined more closely in other film essays in this series.

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*The absorption of the Boran into the district administrative structure has proceeded at a faster pace among the Ethiopian Boran. Since the early 1940s the Ethiopian government has forcibly recruited students and trained them in Addis Ababa and abroad. Upon completion of their training some of these men have been placed in key positions in the two districts in which Boran predominate. At present, one district governor, one sub-district governor, one police chief, the field director of the range management program, and four parliamentarians are of Bôran origin. Nearly all of them are university-educated. As a result, the nomads have begun to identify with their new leaders and representatives rather than continue to regard the district administration and the national government as alien institutions. Although the elitist system of education in the newly conquered regions of southern Ethiopia reaches only a very small segment of the population, it has, nonetheless, paid off, several decades after its introduction, by giving a few highly trained Boran access to positions of power and responsibility. The policy has brought about a significant degree of national integration at least at elite levels.

**In keeping with Boran traditions of primogeniture, it is usually the oldest son who must remain behind to look after the family herds and to protect the family patrimony. Among the traditional nomads, the oldest son was the most privileged of the children. Today, by a curious turn of events, he is the most unfortunate. He survives by trying to view the world and his place in it according to the traditional system of values while his younger brothers go off to another world beyond his reach.

Marsabit boys' secondary school.

Film Dialogue

Now think of this . . .

Your father, with two sons, sent neither of you to school.

Some boys your age already have jobs, haven't they?

Why didn't you get a chance?

We had many cattle, you see!

There were only two sons to look after them.

That's why I didn't go to school.

Peter and Dokata

Film Dialogue

We are peaceful people!

May our nights and days be peaceful!

May the rains fall and fill every pan!

May prosperity and peace fill our kraals!

May God make us peaceful!

Chief Jilo Turkena

But we need to keep in mind that modernization should be geared toward the specific needs of the community if modernity is not to roll over traditional Africa in the manner of a bulldozer, destroying both adaptive and maladaptive features indiscriminately. Modernization should not consist of finding modern solutions for nonexistent problems as in the case of the Kenyan family planning program offered to Boran nomads. Nor should it consist of finding fixed solutions for what are essentially variable ecological problems as in the numerous experiments in settlement that have been introduced in eastern Africa. The new institutional arrangements must be based on thorough scientific and sympathetic understanding of the traditional society and must be versatile enough to continue operating not merely under optimal conditions, but also under the most extreme conditions that ecological fluctuations present.

The road linking Nairobi to Addis Ababa under construction.

FILM LINK

Film Biography

IYA DUBA

Iya Duba.

Iya Duba, about 60, was born near Mega in southern Ethiopia, but came to Kenya as a small boy. He attributes his good health and long life to the fact that his father was rich and fed him a great deal of milk. As a young man of 20 he says he spent most of his time in "hunting fierce animals and chasing women." He killed a buffalo, lion, and an elephant with spears as a part of his coming to manhood, and wears the ivory armbands that symbolize the kills. He also claims to have killed a Gelaba tribesman near Lake Rudolph in a raid on an enemy camp. Other elders bear this out.

Today he says he has retired and no longer chases women or hunts animals. "God must love me," he says, "do I not have my children and grandchildren around me? This is the good time of life." With his one wife he has had five children and seven grandchildren.

Iya Duba has never traveled to Nairobi or central Kenya, never worked for wages, and has had little contact with government aside from six months he spent in prison for killing game illegally.

By Boran standards he is a wealthy man, owning some 250 cows. Because of his wealth and speaking ability he has gained considerable influence, and is often listened to at great length by other elders. He is also considered gruff and rude by younger men, mainly because he demands cigarettes and the largest stool when he arrives at meetings.

Of his relationship with Wako Diriba, the other headman of the village, he says "we are one—there is no trouble." They are not related but live in close proximity. Iya Duba originally came to the village of Wako Diriba as a client, then attracted his own followers and relatives and founded a second, nearby settlement.

ORGE ADE DUBA

Orge Ade Duba, about 58, is the sister of Chief Jilo and lives in Wako Diriba's village. She was born in Sololo, in northern Kenya. Her father was a Chief in the early British administration. Today she has two sons and a daughter, plus six grandchildren. "I've grown old," she says, "and don't remember much of the past. I still enjoy going out to collect firewood and water... that is the role of women.... I will do it until I must walk with a stick."

Orge Ade is a practical woman and she has come to see the value of certain changes. "*Shambas* (farms) are good," she says. "In the past we didn't understand the value of the land."

While her attitude toward education is a progressive one, her views on children and the Boran family are quite traditional: "We are happy to have many children, we are happy to share them around, as long as foster parents have cattle. Certain people give birth to many...one mother may have 20 and that is good. Boran are only interested in those who give birth to many...many daughters are good, as they bring boys as relatives.

"In such cases as drought you must depend on your relatives...they will support you. In such cases of too many children, you must depend on yourself.

"We can't limit the number of children, that is the choice of God...we have nothing to do with this.

"I'm not surprised to hear of the 'pill' medicine...one shouldn't limit children; they will help in the future.... Even if I am an old woman...I would like to have another child."

Guyo Ali.

GUYO ALI

Guyo Ali, about 45, is the informal Assistant Chief of Jilo Turkena. He came to Marsabit as a boy of five and grew up around the mountain. He heads a small village of seven houses and has a family of five children, one of whom is Peter Boru Guyo, the schoolboy in the film. Guyo Ali enjoys a reputation as a pleasant, moderate man who is an able assistant to the chief. This is due partially to his uncommonly good Swahili, which enables him to deal with government officials and other visitors to Boranland.

Chief Jilo Turkena.

CHIEF JILO TURKENA

Chief Jilo is remarkable for his restless energy joined to a powerful mind and a quick wit. He combines a staunch and reasoned commitment to traditional belief and customary modes of behavior with a concern that the Boran of Marsabit advance with the times. For example, Jilo participated joyously in the activities of his generation set, which culminated in the *Gada moji* ceremonies of 1971, but he is also constantly urging by exhortation and example the schooling of girls.

As a young man he was prominent in his age-set and during the few years he spent in Ethiopia he acquired all the trophies appropriate for a warrior. But since the death of his father, when Jilo was in early adulthood, he has devoted himself to the care of his junior siblings, the management of the family herds, and public affairs. When the previous incumbent died in 1953, Jilo was appointed chief.

Wako Diriba.

WAKO DIRIBA

Wako Diriba, about 72, was born near Moyale on the northern border of Kenya and came to Marsabit as a boy of 18. He was a British appointed chief between 1932-1940. He has lived around Marsabit most of his adult life. Like Iya Duba, Wako has not traveled to central Kenya nor worked in any formal employment except as a Chief.

He has been the "father" of the village since 1932—the present site was occupied in 1967 after a move from the northern slopes of Marsabit Mountain.

KENYA

2

Education

KENYA BORAN II

EDUCATION FOR WHAT?

by NORMAN N. MILLER

Contrast two true stories:

In 1965, Peter Boru, then about eight, was dragged kicking and screaming to a police truck to be driven off to school, his mother unsuccessfully trying to hide him under the bed, his father shouting abuses at the police. Seven years later he decided not to go home again and thought only of going on to secondary school to become a doctor, a teacher, or a District Commissioner.

In 1972, Daudi Godana, then 14 years old, walked 150 miles from the Huri Hills to go to school in Marsabit. We happened to give him a lift the last few miles into the town. As we passed a camel caravan whose people he knew he leaned far out of the jeep window, waving and shouting, "I'm going to school! Tell all the people... I'm going to school!" His face was flushed with excitement and he kept waving until the caravan was far out of sight. In town we took him straight to the primary school.

The headmaster shook his head. There was no space in the school, no bed for the boy to use, nothing for him to eat, and no one to take care of him. He lingered in town for two days trying to beg the cost of lodging and food so he could study as a day student. Most people pushed him away, not wishing to create any hope or incur any obligation based on a remote family tie. On the third day he started walking the many miles back across the desert to his home village.

We never saw Daudi Godana again, nor learned how he felt about his attempts to get an education. He is probably tending his family's camels somewhere in the vast arid land of northern Kenya, occasionally wondering what school was all about or what he had really missed.

In the brief seven years between Peter Boru's enforced schooling and the time a herdsboy named Daudi found no hope of formal education whatsoever, a major change was occurring in the attitudes of isolated people toward education.

* * * * *

A decade ago, in the first years of independence for many new states, "education for everyone" was held out as the noblest human investment, the panacea for many development problems. There was the belief that mass schooling could be a yellow brick road leading inexorably upward for the underprivileged and the pre-literate. Gradually these hopes have faded, until recently education has become a quagmire of political conflicts and fallen aspirations. Skepticism and disappointment have replaced the earlier dreams. What are the realities that have tarnished education's image? What is the education dilemma all about? The problem has several facets and, although every Third World country has a different cultural landscape, the fundamental issues are the same.

— **Education for Unemployment.** For a great many primary and secondary students there is simply no place in the marketplace. There are no jobs and their local economies are growing too slowly to accommodate even those students with higher educational attainment.

— **Education for Disappointment.** The process of enlightening gives students hopes that can never be fulfilled and conditions them to expect a way of life that in fact is impossible.

— **Education for Inequality.** Discrimination against girls, against nomadic groups, against poorer students, and against some ethnic groups for political reasons is found in most educational systems. In some nations, more elite elements can use education as a means of maintaining privileges and legitimizing continued high status for themselves and their children.

— **Education for Incompetence.** Even for those who complete set courses there is a growing realization that much of their "learning" has been by rote and there is little competence developed in the areas of creative thinking, initiative, problem solving or even basic technical know-how. This relates directly to the practice of cramming for the exams that determine the gates through which the individual must pass and the type of curriculum imposed on him.

— **Education Costs.** Expenditures on education are increasingly beyond the nation's ability to cope. This includes costs in terms of the proportion of government funds *and* costs in terms of unrest and social discontent.

Taken together many facets of the education problem equal a sizable dilemma for new nations and their leaders. The issues reach into every sector of the society and affect a great many people. What lies behind the dilemma?

The area in northern Kenya in which the films were made is a good example of the Third World's common educational problems. Every year in this beautiful, arid land the trap is set and sprung. Every year young people are pushed up and out of the education system to face unemployment and disillusionment and every year it costs the Kenya government a great deal of money to keep the system going. The film *Kenya Boran* and the life of Peter Boru illustrate many of these issues.

A herdsboy named Daudi.

Dokata Iya.

The Beginning: Informal Learning

A key to understanding the education dilemma is first to understand the conflict between informal, traditional learning and the more academic, schoolroom learning. Informal learning is keyed to the environment, to survival, to the culture and to what is believed important in a cattle-keeping society. This type of learning goes on from the earliest moment of a child's life. It occurs around the hearth as he or she listens to stories and hears the daily news. There is an abundance of wisdom in the proverbs, the sayings, the legends and the tribal history.

The general trend of such learning is to heighten a boy's pride in his tribe, to amplify his religious beliefs and to provide him with an understanding of the working relations between his tribe and others. For girls, learning is equally pragmatic: how to thatch a roof and milk cows, how to tend a hearth, and to care for children, and how to behave toward visitors. Overall for both boys and girls, the village education is intensely practical: how to keep cattle, how to find water, how to live through a drought. On a social plane a child learns how to behave according to his station in life and how to make social progress according to formalized rules. Major tensions ensue when the Borán respond to the demands of the larger society by sending children to school and to starting them on a "modern" life style. Much of the conflict lies in the clash between the traditional ethic, that children should become good herdsmen, versus the government's view that education is the individual's and the state's road to success.

Boran elders believe school erodes the traditional ways. Wako Diriba, headman of one village, was recorded on film talking very much as any elder in a Western society would about young people:

Wako Diriba and Iya Duba.

> They don't respect their mothers or fathers or anybody older. They don't want to follow the old traditions; they can't thrive in the old ways. They have forgotten the ways in which they were brought up. Children in the past could not possibly give a deaf ear to the words of their parents or anybody older. What brought this drastic change only God knows. They say it is best this way, but we disagree. We feel ashamed and we hate this sort of life.

Iya Duba, another elder, states in another way:

> Before this government came the one desire of young people was to care for their herds. Now there are many new things: farms, schools, shops... all young people think of now is going to school. They used to hunt wild animals and enemies like the Rendille... but no longer.

Not everyone holds such strong anti-school views. For some, traditional viewpoints are tempered by the hope held out that a child who goes to school will make money and bring wealth to his family. Others, like the grandmother, Orge Adi, take a more modern view of education, perhaps because she is the sister of the local chief, Jilo Turkena. The different attitudes expressed by Orge Adi and the two male elders underscore the fact that Boran have not yet resolved the tension between modern education and the needs and values of a traditional society.

FILM
LINK

Film Dialogue

Education improves the mind and is permanently kept. No one can deprive you of your learning. What is the use of one who has not gone to school? He is like a madman.

Orge Adi

The Primary Shock

A second reason for the education dilemma is the individual's shock in leaving village ways of informal learning and entering the formal educational system. Very little in a Boran child's early learning prepares him for the experience of a classroom, particularly if it is a boarding school situation fraught with strange regulations, new routines, different foods, harsh teachers, and bullying older boys. No one quite knows what psychological damage is done in this transition from village to classroom. The impact varies between children but it begins a cultural wrecking process. Familiar ways must be forcibly replaced by the rigid codes of the school.

The "stand properly," "with a jump," "run to your classrooms" daily routine, plus the inspections for clean fingernails and clean shirts all give the school a military air which can be very threatening. One of the film crew translators wrote of his first school experience:

> At age six I was taken to school. We knew nothing about education or its profit; we were pushed to school. We arrived at 8:00 and all the new pupils were paraded out. Those below six were pushed aside. Everything was strange, the room, desks, windows, a thin black strip (blackboard) and even the smell of the air was unpleasant. The town boys were well-dressed in shorts and shirts, but we village boys wore only a cloth. Later on our parents were ordered to buy us khaki shirts and shorts.
>
> That first week was the worst I have experienced in my life. The town boys appeared brighter because they could read and write and count up to ten. To us village boys these numbers were strange and bewildering. The teachers taught us with a cane and for every mistake we received two strokes. Learning through fear, some of us managed, but others had to flee back home. In the second week only 20 of us were left. The town boys bullied us and laughed at our mistakes and we were very embarrassed.
>
> Since we were boarding students we had to eat at the school. We were used to milk and meat, but instead we received porridge, rice, and maizemeal. Eating with spoons was very difficult. Some of us refused to do it, but the master on duty gave those who refused six strokes each and then they ate with spoons.

What really happens in a rural primary school? In northern Kenya, as in most systems, the emphasis is on the three basic "R's" and on teaching the rudiments of a "modern" life style: sanitation, teeth care, "proper" behavior, money values, clocks, time, and how to count. Students are immediately taught to memorize and to recite. The conduct of classes is generally formal, with students standing to recite and addressing the teacher formally. Although an attempt is made to relate the lessons to traditional village life, most of the work consists of rote memorization and cramming of facts.

Recently attempts have been made to change the primary school curriculum to include explanations of the environment,

Marsabit primary school.

good farming techniques, and other practical lessons. But this is done without any knowledge of what village learning has already meant to the pupils and how it could be bent to more modern applications.

The overall impact of the primary school experience depends partly on whether the school is a day school or a boarding school. Day school students usually stay in their home villages and walk to classes in the morning, a situation that undoubtedly lessens the psychological impact. For boarding schools the life is totally new with a student's time regimented to include exact lesson times, sleeping times, washing, toilet, and study times.

Teachers in such schools are young, often with only eight years of education themselves plus two years at a teacher training "college." Teachers live on the school compound in quarters provided by the government. Many have outside interests such as a farm or a small business, or are saving to purchase a motorcycle or a car. Many find the isolated existence boring and uninteresting, and some openly admit they are teaching only as a stop-gap measure until a better job or business opportunity turns up.

Secondary School and Rising Expectations

For those who are able to go on to secondary school—a major accomplishment on the educational ladder—life now has new meaning and new expectations. Everyone sees his secondary school certificate as a pass to good job opportunities and indeed in the past when there was a shortage of secondary graduates such an individual could earn 20 or 30 times the wages of a student with only primary school training. This is no longer true. The job market is so glutted that the average secondary graduate in Kenya waits 18 months for his first job, if he finds one at all. Many have simply been unable to get work unless they have important family contacts or friends in the right places.

By this stage, however, the damage has been done. High expectations are now established in a grown person; he has been "exposed" to modern life styles and has come to hope for them. The secondary school is, in fact, the institution behind these high hopes—yet it provides no guarantee of anything after graduation.

How does this happen? How do such false expectations get built up in secondary school students? First, there is the initial pride of getting into the school at all, a strong feeling of uniqueness. There is less regimentation here than in primary school and more treatment as an adult. At the same time the schools are isolated oases, often rarified little communities where the realities of the outside can be ignored or forgotten. Students live, eat, study, carry on sports, and do their garden work and other activities within the school compound. There, life is nearly devoid of contact with their home village. In its place the "school"

To the schoolboys the village is very lonely. . . .

Guyo Ali

provides all the necessities and, for most students, these necessities are on a scale they have never attained before. The Marsabit Secondary School Headmaster described the situation:

> By Western standards, facilities here for teaching and boarding are only adequate. Books and pencils are in short supply and desks are often shared. However, the students do not see it this way. The Boran students, while not liking all the food they get, find the assured supply of food a luxury. The beds they sleep in are definitely luxurious compared with the beds in the villages. And sufficient water, readily available, comes into the same category.

A comment from a secondary student supports the headmaster's opinion:

> I was very amazed to see those walls of books in the library, the teachers in nice homes, the clean tables we ate from.

Aside from the institutional trappings, the daily routine of lessons opens up new horizons and new hopes. There is a controlled inflow of information from the outside world; newspapers arrive, radio broadcasts are heard and talked about and an occasional film portrays the attractions of urban life or of some other culture.

The new hopes and expectations are mainly ingrained through the formal studies that go on and through "career" talks. The stimulus to cram in facts that lead to high hopes comes from the grim awareness that the next examinations will determine one's further opportunity.

Secondary education follows a curriculum set down by the government and carried out by teachers who are mainly government employees. There is little problem of encouraging students to study, for the stiff competition ensures a desperate scramble for grades. Students are more likely to have to be reprimanded for using flashlights to study after lights out. Rule infractions may be no more serious than wearing street clothes instead of school uniforms, sneaking out at night, borrowing money, or smoking in the dormitory.

The academic learning in schools is in direct antithesis to the practical and social education in the villages. The shock of education continues even into secondary school. The traditional idea that education should be directly practical is difficult to apply to academic studies which, to Boran students, are by and large practically useless. This causes confusion in the students' minds and often seems to generate a kind of restless despondency in those for whom the contrast is the greatest.

The net result of these very different approaches to education is an almost complete lack of contact between the schools and the

Geography teacher, Marsabit secondary school.

villagers. Parents know nothing of what happens in school and do not understand what is happening to their children who go there. The Marsabit Headmaster writes:

> Parents' day at the school is held once a year and attendance is small, mainly because of the distance parents have to come and the fear they will be asked to contribute more money. They probably have no idea of the use of academic studies and no idea that an individualistic education will take their sons away from the village and its rigid social framework. Probably parents have had their sons cajoled from them by promises that they will later on get good jobs and a lot of money to support their families. This is only partly true, supposing their sons are able to find jobs. They usually become so enmeshed with personal affairs (clothes, housing, girlfriends, entertainment) that they find their meagre salaries far from adequate even for themselves. Only a token amount remains for their families.

What education seems to have provided, quite apart from any academic learning, is an induction into middle-class life styles. Students themselves usually have no coherent idea of the forces acting upon them and changing their lives. Perhaps understandably, Boran students whose ties to their home villages remained very close seemed to suffer from a restless malaise that always made it difficult for them to settle into the studying necessary at the school. They seemed to have to force themselves to push on with their school work and often became introspective and downcast. Teachers believe the students' confusion plus their gradual realization that education may not get them their hoped-for life style leads to a kind of withdrawal. This withdrawal is both from the world of traditional values and from the rarified atmosphere of the school.

Peter Boru.

The Peter Boru Story

Peter Boru, the schoolboy personality in *Kenya Boran*, started his educational career under duress. He was forced into a police truck and against his parents' wishes driven off to school. Seven years later he had become such a convert to the system that he had no thought of going home. His closing words in the film underscore this:

FILM
LINK

"You see, I am saying this:
I have been schooling for seven years
For all these seven years, I am paying fees
And then when I finish my schooling, in standard seven, and
then I go back to the village, it is a great shame, a shame...

"You cannot go back to the village?"

"I can't again
Yeah, I must go on
Just must, m-u-s-t, must!"

What happened to Peter Boru? How realistic were his hopes to go on? Does his life exemplify some of the "Education for What" dilemma faced by many new nations?*

In fact Peter Boru may be succeeding in his dreams, at least partially. Shortly after the film crew left Marsabit in 1972, Peter and the other standard seven boys took the all-important final examinations to determine their rank in class and their future. Peter passed, but not very well, ranking in about the middle of the class. He failed to get a place in secondary school. For a while after this he worked part time as an assistant clerk at the government offices, looking for other work and trying other possibilities.

Sometime earlier he had joined the local Anglican church and now considered himself a Christian. This fact helped in that the Anglican missionary took notice of him, possibly because of his film experience, and looked out for his interests. When word came to the mission that one of the boys already accepted for a teacher training course was not going to attend, the missionary was able to get Peter in as a last-minute replacement.

The teacher training college is at Meru in central Kenya, an institution run by the government to train primary school teachers. It is a two-year course which then produces graduates with a "third class" primary teaching certificate (P-3), the first rung on the career ladder as a teacher.

When we last saw Peter in Marsabit he had completed the first year at the school successfully. He gave us this account of his life.

- Life at college is "okay." He lives in a tiny room with three others and can come home only twice a year. He likes the work and looks forward to a teaching post in his home area.

- He now dresses in new "mod" clothes, which are fashionable in Nairobi and other urban areas: bell-bottom trousers, wide leather belt, knit shirt, and leather jacket.

- He carries a walking stick, which in Boranland suggests status. He has entered politics and is helping one of the local candidates campaign for re-election.

- He smokes, borrowing cigarettes from many of the local people on the main street.

- He went through his age grade (*hariya*) ceremony when we were in Marsabit and says he is "loving ladies now." He also has a girl friend at the college whom he likes, but "she is from another area" and he probably will not bring her home.

- His father has arranged to betroth him to a five-year-old girl. He knows the little girl, thinks her pretty, but says he might not want to wait the eight to ten years to marry her. In Boran fashion, it is an economic arrangement worked out by his father with the girl's family.

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*In 1974 two of the film crew returned to Marsabit to show the films and to learn what changes had occurred in the lives of several of the people who had appeared in the Kenya film series. Peter Boru served as master of ceremonies when the films were shown to a large town audience in the school cafeteria.

- Peter worried about his family throughout the drought period. His father, Guyo Ali, had fallen on hard times. All the family cattle had died, the maize crop had failed three times, and there had been a great deal of hunger. Peter had received help from the mission for his schooling but his family continued to suffer. They were all counting on his helping as soon as he could begin working.

* * * * *

What is the outlook for Peter Boru? He is a typical participant in the education dilemma. With a little luck, however, and all-important help from a missionary, he managed to slip into a training college. We met many ex-students hanging around the dusty streets of Marsabit who had not been so lucky.

As a P-3 teacher Peter will be able to teach grades one through four. If he passes an equivalent of a Kenya secondary school examination, which he can take while working, he will be upgraded to P-2 and will be in a higher salary bracket and able to teach higher grades. Starting as a P-3 he will make about $75 a month including hardship pay if he is posted in a remote school (any posting in Marsabit is considered remote). He must list five choices of location, not all in his home area, and can only count on one month's holiday a year. The rest of the time his school is not in session he must be on call for administrative duties and must stay on the school grounds.

He plans to give his family between $15 - $30 a month—"whatever they ask for"—and to try to save the rest.

Peter Versus the Examination Odds

When Peter graduated from primary school, the 22 primary schools in Marsabit District had a total of 340 students who took their exams. Fifty-five per cent passed, including Peter who was about midway in the ranking. The top 30 got places in the Marsabit Secondary School and some of the rest went to Moyale where 40 other places were open in a "Harambee" school which charged extra fees. About 170 (45 per cent) failed the exam. Their hopes for any further training were ended.

Peter's exam performance was aided, the headmaster reported, by a very good "personal report." He was considered moderately bright and generally well-behaved. He had also worked within the system, being an assistant storekeeper for a year, which the headmaster took into account.

What happened to Peter's friends in the film? Stephen Godana also passed the primary school exam, but without distinction. He was offered and accepted a place as a trainee prison warden. Dokata Iya, the herdsboy, moved the cattle to Ethiopia with his father, Iya Duba, when the drought and famine struck the area in 1973. They lost about 50 per cent of their herd. Peter had heard rumors that they were planning to return to Marsabit when the rains and grass were better.

Marsabit secondary school.

Education for What? The Search for Solutions

Solutions to the problem that education breeds incompetence, unemployment, discontentment, all at a high cost, lie in changing at least three main factors:

- government policy and assumptions on education
- what happens in school
- the amount of education given

Third World governments, operating under a legacy of colonial policies, with the newer influence of Western planners, generally have built-in assumptions about education. What are these?

1. That education is *good*. In fact, it may not be, if it leads to the discontent and social unrest that has become apparent.

2. That there is a direct connection between the level of a job and the level of education needed for that job. For most jobs this is simply not true. What happens under this assumption is that education becomes the "gate-pass" and the "necessary credential" for a good job regardless of the real skills required.

3. That mass education in basic classroom skills ("3 R's") is good at least for primary school. This assumption was even debatable before high costs, rising population, world food shortages and world energy shortages became so obvious. In many areas it may now be essential that young men spend school time digging, herding, or fishing to stay alive. School becomes a luxury when food and money become scarce.

4. That there is an intrinsic "right" to education. The population boom and the rising costs have probably ended this hope.

5. That educated citizens are more understanding, law abiding, less violent, less rebellious and more stable elements in the society. In fact, they may not be. The coming revolutions may be led by the educated unemployed who see themselves as cast-outs with nothing to lose.

Overall, one of the most damaging of the above assumptions is the Western idea that links schools to a job. The terrible consequence is that school equals access to money, wealth, power, status, prestige, honor—and practically any payoff society can offer.

What are some of the cures? First, to de-emphasize education as a panacea; second, to re-evaluate education in the national ideology as only one of several goods (along with honesty, hard work, self-reliance, agricultural skills, cooperation) given greater emphasis; third, to provide a higher attainment other than those based solely on educational credentials. The reinstatement of the "self-made man" (or "woman") ideal would also help. This includes a re-emphasis on such things as survival skills, creative problem solving and on better adaptation to one's own environment. Greater opportunity for female students in most areas of the world is essential. It is probably necessary to reduce the number of years a student is expected to remain in school. Tanzania, for example, stresses four years as the ideal limit for the majority of the population, believing it is enough to teach the basic skills of self-reliance. Other policy shifts that would help in most countries include greater stress on adult training courses, on farmer training centers, and on mobile education cinemas. There might also be greater use of school facilities at night for those who want to learn but who must work during the day.

If the educational dilemma and the economic problems for the Third World become any worse it will be necessary to face up to several very grim realities. Most leaders will probably be increasingly unwilling to spend education money to meet the needs of the growing population. Many regions will be banished to perpetual illiteracy, and others will be written off as unproductive and unimportant sectors of the society. Under these conditions education will indeed become a rare privilege.

Facts on Marsabit Education
1974

Marsabit Town Primary Boarding School, standard 1-7	250 students
Marsabit Town Secondary Boarding School, form I-IV	160 students

Marsabit District

Total primary schools (1974)	22
Total enrollments 1-7 (1974)	4842
Total enrollments 1-7 (1971)	2766
Total secondary schools (1974)	2
Total enrollments (1974)	200

In January 1974 the Kenya government took a major step toward attaining the long-term objective of free primary education, by the remission of fees in Standards 1 to 4 in primary schools. In addition, fees for Standards 5 to 7 were fixed at Kenya Shillings 60 / = per term for all public primary schools throughout the country. North-Eastern Province recorded an increase of 28 per cent in primary enrollments, the largest growth of all provinces in 1973. But the area lags far behind the rest of Kenya in proportion of children attending school and enrollments account for only around 13 per cent of the total eligible population.

Fees are remitted for all students for grades 1-7. Within northern drought-affected districts national fees were remitted for grades 1-4. Payment is 60 / = ($8.57) per term for upper primary school (grades 5, 6, and 7).

KENYA

3

Rural Economy

BORAN HERDSMEN

Survival Economics in the Dry Lands

by Norman N. Miller

Iya Duba.

Boran Wealth - The Economics of Cattle-herding

For the Boran cattle are the symbol of wealth, the economic "life spirit," and the most highly valued object. Boran distinguish between wealth, meaning cattle, and wages, meaning money. Ambitious young men are sometimes blamed for seeking only wages and neglecting wealth. A person's wealth and property is simply cattle. At the same time Boran realize that other people value other things: Gabbra, camels; Warta hunters, wild animals; Europeans, money. Because some Boran are beginning to farm, they extend the concept of wealth to include garden produce and cash crops. Anthropologist Paul Baxter points out the Boran idea of wealth is close to the pre-sixteenth century English use of the term "cattle," meaning all movable property, especially livestock. The distinction between "cattle" and "chattel" had not yet occurred. "Capital" was developed from the same word source.

The traditional Boran view of cattle, however, would not be considered capitalistic. Boran try not to sell cattle, but rather to build up their herds. Cattle themselves are "wealth" because they are essential for the family diet of milk and meat. Herdsmen avoid selling cattle for the very basic survival reasons and for attaining status in the eyes of others. Iya Duba, a mature Boran herdsman, expresses typical Boran disdain for men with small herds.*

Some of these attitudes are changing, as government projects for education and economic development begin to have an impact, and as Boran are drawn further into the money economy. Cattle may be sold because a family has lost members, either through death or migration to another area, or because money is needed to keep children in school, to pay debts, or for other reasons.

The Boran pastoralists usually sell their animals to small-scale local traders. Although the price is argued upon in Kenya shillings, payment is often made in food, cloth, utensils, or other goods. The risk involved in stock trading rests with the petty trader and lies in the likelihood of quarantines or other government restrictions that can prevent resale for long periods.

The key to a Boran herdsman's life is movement in an area of two or three hundred square miles. It is the availability of the grass and the coming of the rains which dictate his constant movement, adapting and balancing himself and his herds to his ability to understand and deal with the environment. His ability to predict the availability of grass and water determines where his herd will

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***Film Dialogue**

Tell them this, a small herd won't do any good. A small number is useless. But a big herd is good. It is in God's hands we place the cattle. Many cattle help in everything. It helps the government, it will help the Boran, even those who don't own many cattle. A small herd produces a small amount of milk . . . very little meat.

Iya Duba

move and how his family will fare. The season, the stars, news from passers-by, gossip, rumor, and Boran lore all go into a decision. Judgments are made by individual homesteads and when neighbors do not agree they take their herds in different directions.

The day-to-day herding of the cattle falls to the young men, who may go miles from the home village or the nearest road. It is an enormous responsibility because a family's entire wealth and economic well-being depend on their judgments. Boys, some as young as fourteen, must be able to perceive such dangers as thieves, poisonous grasses, dangerous terrain, or worse, raiders or marauding animals which can cost them their lives. Cattle are constantly endangered by and must be protected from poisonous grasses, from rocky slopes and slippery wells, from bad water or leeches, and from wandering into ravines or straying from the herd.

Punishment for a lad who loses or injures a cow is extreme. He will certainly be humiliated and chastized, he will probably be beaten, and the loss will be taken from the stock he is to inherit when he marries years later. No other shame, aside from that of a moral infraction, would be as great to him.

Cattle-keeping is the first lesson a Boran male learns. He begins as a child herding calves in the corral or sheep and goats in the nearby grass. At about age six or eight he will accompany older boys and learn from them the dangers of the terrain, which cows are particularly troublesome, where lion are likely to be, and the best vantage points to watch cattle. At elders' meetings he will lounge in the background and listen to their wisdom accumulated in years of cattle-keeping and from the stories of past mistakes. Before he takes responsibility for a herd of cattle he will have grown up with the lore and his sense of danger will be finely honed.

* * * * *

A composite picture of a Boran family is one of constant movement and change. Aside from father, mother, and young babies in the home village, most other family members are separated almost constantly. Young men are out in temporary cattle camps, young boys herding or in boarding school, young girls tending goats, gathering firewood, or carrying water. If camels are part of the family herd these are kept by relatives or hired herdsmen in drier areas. Some cattle may also be kept by kinsmen in Ethiopia. People move with the herds and are seldom all together as a family unit except for major religious occasions or at burials. Contact is maintained by word of mouth and by endless travel. Boran are great walkers and think little of strolling miles across hostile, rocky terrain simply to pass the time of day with a friend or to gather the news.

The people who keep cattle and camels live in mobile villages of between three and 30 homesteads. Villages which keep only sheep are rare and usually have no more than three homesteads. Every village has a "father" or an elder alongside whose homestead others decide to build. He is usually rich in stock and can afford to carry out ritual obligations and to tide the others over with milk and meat in hard times. Homesteads move often and the villages are neither permanent nor political units. Villages which are within walking distance of one another develop a vague sense of solidarity, however, especially during the dry seasons.

Calf byre in a Boran village.

Stock is owned by males and in theory is inherited strictly through the father's line, all but specified beasts passing to the eldest son. Women may own bulls or infertile cows, but not breeding stock. "Fathers" of herds, like "fathers" of the land in many African agricultural societies, are trustees of a herd on which future generations depend, but the herd is not at his free disposal. A man has no right to endanger his descendants and, as father of a herd, he is responsible for its welfare. Even an elder brother who has recently inherited family stock is prevented from any abuse by rigid checks on his authority.

For day-to-day purposes the herd may be considered as jointly administered by all living brothers. Where the herd is large enough to support separate homesteads, brothers often live with stock in different villages and may be scattered all over Boran country. Boran believe that members of a family should live with the stock according to a strict age priority. For example, in a family with five adult brothers the stock would be divided as follows:

First-born son	- milk cows
Second-born son	- milk camels
Third-born son	- dry cows
Fourth-born son	- dry camels
Fifth-born son	- sheep and goats

Survival and the Supernatural

How does one learn to manipulate the environment? How does one learn to live with the whims of nature, particularly when that environment is rife with such hazards as drought, predatory wild animals, or violent attacks by enemy raiders.

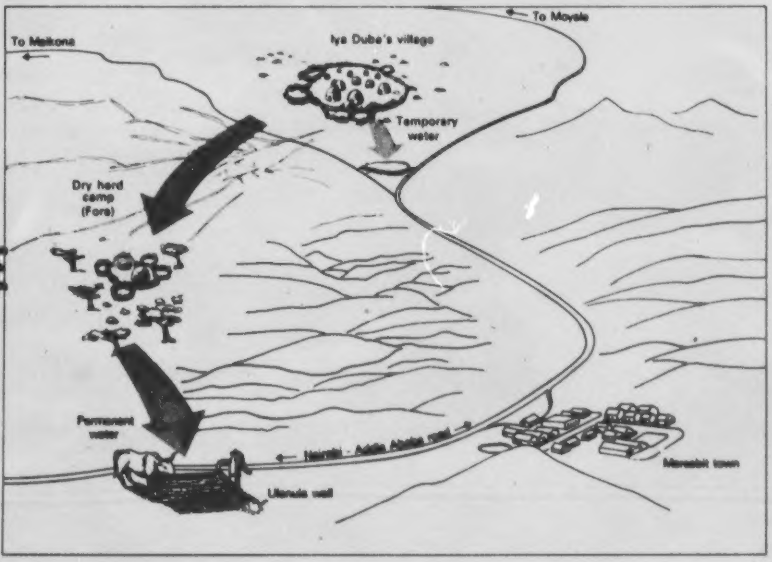
The Boran occasionally seek supernatural help to deal with these hazards. They try to foretell the future by reading the stomach lining of a slaughtered cow. With its many veins and arteries, the integument is read as a kind of map which allows for speculation about and interpretation of forthcoming events. Divining is a public act which calls attention to a possible calamity and serves as an early-warning system for the community. It transfers the problem to a higher authority and provides an excuse for human failure. It is the sociable and civic thing to do if problems arise. And it gives the diviners high status, particularly if they turn out to be correct.

FILM LINK

Divinations are made on many occasions and are always concerned with some specific event, such as the birth of a son, fear of an enemy attack, the reason for a death, or the question of where and when rain will fall. Divining may uncover wicked intentions or help fill in the gaps in human knowledge. Those who are ill may arrange a divination ceremony to help them. Reading a cow's stomach lining is a high form of ceremony, reflecting the importance of cattle in Boran society. On lesser occasions goat entrails may be used to read the future. Ceremonies using coffee beans are a part of daily rituals that insure blessings for the family or village group as well as playing an important role at chief's meetings or elders' gatherings. Boran, however, do not "throw bones," divine with chicken entrails, or use any of the more complicated paraphernalia that some African agricultural people use.

Whatever role divining has in decision-making, it is combined with an astute human awareness of the environment. In order to survive, a Boran must have a great deal of knowledge about the weather, the rains, the winds, the soil, and the range. A herdsman must know the life cycle of grasses, where temporary and permanent water can be found and, socially, who is where, who is going where, and who is available to do the herding. Such social and environmental factors combined with the wisdom of Boran lore help herdsmen make decisions. Decisions are usually talked out in family or village groups, but it is ultimately the family head who takes the responsibility for what the stock movements will be and what grazing and watering plans will be followed.

For these reasons the map in the mind of a herdsman is crucial. He must, as the film map shows, move between his home village, and areas in which he has rights to temporary pastures, and permanent wells. The map deals only with patterns for cattle. Strategies for other livestock such as camels, sheep, and goats are different, although all may be owned by one family and tended by



FILM MAP

kinsmen or hired help. To understand the herding family is to envision their movements with each type of stock as "wheels within wheels." Their crucial decisions are how to use the environment effectively enough to survive.

The Environment

Climate, geology, and vegetation create four main ecological zones in Boranland: a very arid zone (about 65 per cent of the district); an arid zone (about 31 per cent of the district); a semi-arid area (about 3 per cent of the district); and a small sub-humid zone (about 1 per cent of the district). Each ecological zone has its distinguishing features and together they create an environment that is harsh, hot, and very difficult to live in. Boran have tended to keep their cattle in the higher pastures around Mr. Marsabit, Sololo, or the Ethiopian plateau. They graze them closer to the desert's edge after the two short rainy seasons, when new grass is available, and closer to perennial grass growing at the higher elevations in dry periods. All grazing is dependent upon the changing pasture conditions and the whereabouts of water. The area in which the film was made is a semi-arid zone. The region includes the middle and upper slopes of Mt. Marsabit which are characterized by open grass cover and scattered bush. On the steeper, lower slopes, as the mountain drops off toward the desert, less edible grass appears and there is an increase in stones and rocky soil. A greater amount of scrub and dwarf bush is also common. As one comes up the mountain toward Marsabit town, thicker and more luxuriant grasses occur.

Environmental Features

- unreliable erratic rainfall
- irregular forage and grass
- scattered water points and uncertain water conditions
- seasonal drought
- tick-borne cattle diseases
- fly-borne human diseases
- wild predators, including lion and hyena

Geologically, Mt. Marsabit is one of three important hill masses in the district. Between the hill areas lava plateaus and dry scrub bush country stretch out to the north to meet the Ethiopian escarpment and a higher plateau. Numerous ridges, rolling hills, and rocky outcrops dot the landscape. The plain to the south of the mountain is partly volcanic and partly basement soils which are cut by north-south stream channels. To the west of Mt. Marsabit is the imposing volcanic desert area known as the Dida Galgalla, a region so hostile and rock-strewn that access is impossible except by foot. To the southwest also lies the Chalbi desert, a dry, inward-drainage system that is completely barren except for a little vegetation around scattered water holes. The two main rivers in the district, Milgis and Merille, are in the far south, flowing from west to east. Shallow depressions and gentle sandy stream beds provide drainage closer to Mt. Marsabit. Mt. Marsabit itself is a large volcanic pile surrounded by lava fields cut into exceptionally rugged boulders.

Marsabit Town and Mt. Marsabit.

The climate of the district has extreme variation. The higher slopes of Mt. Marsabit, Mt. Kulal, and the Moyale-Sololo escarpment serve as moisture catchment areas with rainfall usually in excess of 500 millimeters per year. Rain concentrates in the two wet seasons which follow the southeast monsoon during March-May and the northeast monsoon during October-December. Nearby lowland areas of the district have far less rain. Some points receive only 160 millimeters and high evaporation adds to the overall aridity of the lowlands.

The years in which grass and rain are abundant are bonus times for the herdsmen and permit the replacement of stock destroyed by drought. It is, however, the dry years which determine the general level of prosperity and set an upper limit on the size of the herds and flocks. Livestock can be, and often are, decimated in years of drought.*

When one of the rainy seasons fails the stock must remain close to the permanent wells on pastures that are parched and overgrazed. Erosion around wells—commonplace throughout northern Kenya—is only one of the very serious ecological problems directly related to the weather.

Rain is so crucial to the Boran way of life that pleas for rain are part of daily prayers, public meetings, and a constant source of conversation. "May it rain on you" is a customary greeting and blessing. The Boran's ideal "Golden Age" was a time when it rained every day.

Competition for the Environment

Environmental competition between herdsmen, farmers, and wildlife is common throughout the semi-arid and sub-humid zones because, even here, natural resources are meager. A part of the Boran genius in herding lies in using all the harsh lands to their fullest, but in bad times the "fallback" zones for both man and animal become the areas around the mountain that have permanent water.

Under normal conditions competition is still intense, by temperate zone standards. Cattle compete for grass with dry land browsers such as Grant's gazelle, bushbuck, zebra, giraffe, and rhinocerous. Greater kudu are found in some mountain areas and elephant, buffalo, and wild pig live throughout the grasslands. Lion, leopard, and hyena prey on livestock, and Boran history is full of accounts of how men have protected their cattle from attack. There are also graphic reports of man's frailty in the face of such attacks, particularly by lions. Wild pig, buffalo, and elephant are so destructive to the farms and to wells used by herdsmen that moats have been built near the forests to contain the animals.**

When drought conditions become acute, as they did in 1971 and again in 1973 and 1974, pressures on natural resources reach a breaking point—meaning that some of the people and animals cannot survive. An often unappreciated but critical preliminary to this stage is the destruction of the forest around the mountain,

**The great heat, the intense aridity, the more or less constant wind, the dust storms, the fatigue of travel, whether by motor transport or by camel, all combine to make observations somewhat laborious.*

Geologists' exploration, 1950s.

**Other natural enemies for the herdsmen include snakes, especially cobras and mambas, which are a particular danger to the young boys out herding cattle and small children in the villages. Some of the cases admitted to the local clinic were people bitten when snakes, moving through the thatching on a house roof toward the part warmed by smoke, fell on sleeping occupants.

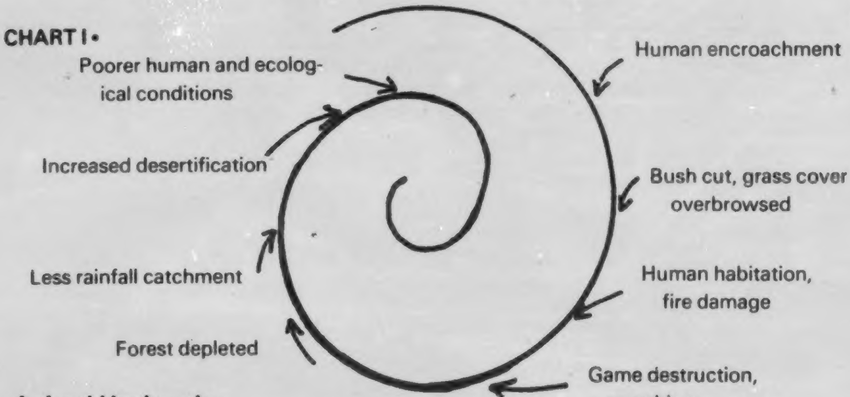
Insect pests, particularly in the rainy season, are malarial mosquitoes and a multitude of flies that transmit eye ailments and other diseases. People are resigned to the fact that fly-infested cattle corrals must be close to human dwellings. Thus flies are an accepted part of the daily life and even regarded as a good sign because they indicate the nearness of cattle.

because the woodland is vital for attracting rainfall. Destruction occurs for several reasons: farmers push into the woodlands to clear plots and grow crops; herdsmen take cattle farther up the mountain and overgraze in many sectors; forest fires caused by humans increase; and elephants, buffalo, and baboons defoliate and destroy trees. As all wildlife become more desperate for water, many dry-land browsers such as gazelle, bushbuck, and giraffe move up into the mountain in search of water and better grazing. These animals, plus the elephant and buffalo competing for food, damage the trees by eating bark, leaves, roots, and seed pods. The conditions also make poaching easy and illegal killing rises at an astonishing rate as hunters take advantage of the weakened state of the animals and their large concentrations.

When the animal population suffers to this degree, the entire ecological system is disrupted. Few local people, aside from the forestry and wildlife officials, realize the extent to which a diminished forest affects rainfall and hastens the desertification of the entire area. Ecologically there emerges an unfortunate chain of events which results in a downward spiral of the environment's ability to sustain all forms of life. In simplified terms, deterioration of the herdsman's environment begins with the human encroachment into the forest, as shown in Chart I.

Government cattle inoculations.

CHART I •


Poorer human and ecological conditions
Human encroachment
Increased desertification
Bush cut, grass cover overbrowsed
Less rainfall catchment
Human habitation, fire damage
Forest depleted
Game destruction, poaching

Animal Husbandry

The Boran name is applied to the breed of cattle commonly found throughout the Marsabit area. The breed is considered particularly well-suited to dry, scrub bush conditions and is believed to have originated in the border areas of Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya. The cattles' coats are predominantly white, but gray, red, pied, and polled animals also occur. The horns are variable and can grow to enormous length, as seen at the crush in the inoculation scenes in the film. Their humps are well-defined, upright, thoracic, and harder in the males. Most animals have a very straight top line and well-developed hind quarters. They are moderately good milkers. The calving interval is 11 to 14 months. When selected for beef purposes, Boran cattle are one of the outstanding African breeds.

In southern Kenya the animals are in demand and a Boran Cattle Breeders Society was founded in 1951. When Boran-type cattle have been sent to ranches in the Kenya highlands they have often been interbred with Hereford stock, with generally good results. They develop straight top lines and well-developed hind quarters. Other humped breeds in Africa include the Sudanese, Abyssinian, Karamajong, and East African Zebu.

Productivity in East Africa is presently limited, however, by the need to transport animals through tick-infested areas or to raise them in tick country. Mortality is high and although there has been experimentation to try to pre-immunize the breed, the offspring of immunized stock generally have not inherited any resistance to tick-borne diseases such as East Coast Fever.

Boran cattle-keeping practices are similar to those of other pastoralists across Africa. Cows are herded during the day and penned at night within a brush stockade. If there is no danger from wild animals or raiders the corral is simply constructed of piled brushwood; if there is danger, stronger staked stockades are built. This is a man's work and an axe is a part of every male's herding equipment. Most houses also contain a small elevated calf pen for newborn calves and often a calf or two sleeps around the family hearth at night. Young unmarried men usually sleep in the cattle enclosure to protect the animals, except in the safer, and colder, mountain highlands, where the men sleep inside a house.

Watering cattle, like herding, is man's work, but women assist when there is insufficient male labor available. Work at the wells is difficult and requires knowledge of what is going on and what is needed when. At least one herder is required to control the animals at the trough and to drive them off when they have drunk. Another herder, and usually more than one, is required to control the herd as it waits for water and let them through to the trough as others finish. Children and women assist in controlling herds which have drunk or are waiting to drink. Wells are described by the number of persons needed on the bucket chain. At Marsabit there are eight-man wells but in other places there are wells requiring up to thirty men. Buckets of giraffe-hide are used for watering; they are light, rigid, and tough and no effective substitute has been found for them. Boran bitterly resent that the hunting of giraffes has been forbidden to them and are prepared to risk imprisonment for the sake of maintaining the supply of buckets. buckets.

The government's pressure to develop this area for beef cattle, and to exploit the cattle coming in from Ethiopia and the northern border, leads to large herds of cattle being driven south through the center of Boranland. The herds eat the grass and drink the water that the local Boran depend upon. The conflict between government interest and local interest intensifies the people's distaste for any government decree and entrenches traditional attitudes.

BORAN CATTLE KEEPING

Specific factors in Boran cattle-keeping practices may be summarized as follows:

Food - Pasture only, no supplements, no hay.

Salt - Obtained from salt pans on Chalbi Desert, brought by pack donkey, collected by herdsman's family or purchased from traders.

Branding - Not done, except for curative purposes. Ear tabbing by inoculation officials. Individual cows are well-known by owners.

Castration - Occasionally done to troublesome bulls.

De-horning - Not done; Boran love large horns.

Milking - Usually twice a day, by women or young men. Women's rights to control milk give them a special status.

Milk Products - Fresh milk, some yogurt, butter, sour milk and curds; no cheese.

Fences & Tethers - Small calves penned in platforms above ground; half-grown calves fenced; bulls, restive cows tethered.

Mortality - Estimated at 9 per cent of total herd per year (UNFAO).

Disease Control - Quarantine, segregation, indigenous medicine, plus what government offers in inoculation campaigns.

Aside from cattle, other Boran livestock include donkeys, sheep, goats, and camels. Every cattle-keeping homestead requires the use of donkeys or camels as pack animals when the family moves from one site to another. Donkeys are also used for carrying salt for the cattle from the Chalbi Desert and for carrying water for calves and the household. Donkeys in Boran country are independent, hardy animals and are usually not included in the families' grazing strategies. During the day they graze, mostly unattended, around the village. They are not penned or tethered after sundown unless danger is anticipated. Like dogs, they serve to raise an alarm at night if anything unexpected occurs, although more often they are a constant source of false alarms and will bolt and bray around a village often for no reason. Boran express no particular attachment to donkeys but recognize their essential function in helping them maintain the Boran life style. They do not milk them, nor eat their meat.

Sheep and goats are shepherded in a common flock and penned together at night. In addition to their use as milk-givers and as meat, they also serve as a form of cash crop. They are sold to provide cash for buying tobacco, sugar, tea, coffee beans, cloth, and an increasing range of consumer goods. Sheep and goats are not as highly valued nor as cherished as cows or camels, and often are referred to disparagingly as "tobacco." Some women and children occasionally have a favorite sheep which they keep inside at night and hand feed during the day. Homesteads that are totally dependent on sheep and goats are considered unfortunate. Those who devote their lives to the care of such flocks are believed to be solitary men, uneasy in the company of others, often tongue-tied and not fully socialized.

Some men have no alternative but to lead a flockmaster's life; but if they actually prefer to do so they are considered eccentric. The only instance of the murder of one Boran by another which took place during the time of Paul Baxter's field study occurred in a sheep homestead near Lake Rudolf. A young man had attached himself to an isolated sheep and goat homestead whose flock was cared for only by a solitary man and his daughter. It seemed the young man killed the old man and absconded with the daughter and flock to Ethiopia. What happened to the couple was never learned, but it was argued that such an heinous crime would only have occurred at an isolated sheep and goat homestead.

Camels are owned by Boran, but the main camel people in the area are the Gabbra, who are close cultural and linguistic cousins of the Boran. Gabbra herdsmen intermarry with Boran and may tend Boran camels in the desert areas for Boran herdsmen who are busy with cattle. For those camel keepers who live almost entirely on camel milk, as do the Gabbra, the animal husbandry is complex. Camels have a twelve-month gestation period, after which herdsmen must share some milk with the calves. This prompts the Gabbra to stagger the impregnation of their camels and thus

Cattle Keeping (Cont'd.)

Breeding - Controlled only via castration.

Cattle Population/Range - Most observers feel range could carry more cattle.

Cattle Diseases - Trypansomiasis in both cattle and camels is common throughout the area. Under normal conditions an eradication campaign using Ethidium Bromide tablets or Antryade sulphate are effective. Drought-related illnesses, plus constant cattle movements and intermixing, make the inoculations less effective. Other diseases such as hoof and mouth, anthrax, blackwater, heartwater and Jones Disease are worrisome and constantly guarded against. The dreaded rinderpest which historically has wiped out great herds in East Africa is watched for very carefully. During the drought of 1973, 44,082 animals were inoculated in Marsabit District.

Rustling - Not between Boran; common practice with surrounding "enemy" groups: Rendille, Shankilla, Somali, and others.

Typical Herd Composition (UNFAO)	*% of total herd*
Calves under one year	24
Heifers, not yet calved	20
Immature males (1-2 years)	10
Mature males	6

assure that human needs are fulfilled at all times. A single camel will provide milk in various quantities, depending on the time of her pregnancy.

Camel Milk Supply

Pregnancy Period

Month:	1 2 3 4 5 6	7 8 9	10 11 12
Milk Available for Human Consumption:	some milk	no milk	good milk

With Newborn Calf

1 2 3 4	5 6 7 8 9 10
declining	poor or none

Mating occurs only in response to rain; thus any long drought throws the whole cycle out of balance. The lack of rain causes a failure to impregnate and consequently a radical depletion of the basic milk supply for all humans. Even with the return of the rains a camel herdsman's life can be difficult. Male camels in their excitement to mate become extremely difficult to handle and may kill each other in vying for a female.

Other dangers exist. Although camels are penned at night, during the day they browse over a very large area and can easily stray. Any stray, particularly a young camel, is prey for lion. In dry periods the traditional balance between man, land, and animals can be further upset. For example, unprecedented lion attacks on Gabbra livestock occurred during the drought in the early 1970s because herdsmen were forced to invade the scrub bush country that lions inhabit in order to graze their stock nearer the limited watering points. The smaller wildlife that lion generally feed upon, such as bushbuck, dik-dik and gazelles, fled from the presence of humans. Because lions need scrub bush for cover, they do not follow the browsing animals into the open desert but turn instead to the Gabbra livestock, particularly the young camels. Herdsmen protect the stock with spears, and usually, if seen in time, lions will be killed or driven off. Gabbra herdsmen group together to try to kill the lions, but invariably the man who withstands the first charge is mauled before others can assist. Few human deaths have been reported, but the many recent cases of lion mauling admitted to Marsabit hospital indicate the seriousness of the situation.

Gabbra camels.

Grazing Patterns

Because of the seasonal cycle and the different requirements of cattle, camels, sheep, and goats, constant migration between grazing areas is necessary. This would be true even if permanent water points were in abundance. Three main types of grazing patterns exist for the Boran:

Dry season. Stock are moved from the dry areas to grasslands in higher rainfall areas, where they could, if necessary, graze eight to twelve months. These areas, around Mt. Marsabit and the Huri Hills, have ample year-round grass. They are avoided in the rainy seasons because waterlogging of stock, flooding, and waterborne diseases make these areas unhealthy.

Inter-season. Between the wet and dry periods stock are moved gradually across temporary ranges. Most of the grass belongs to hardy, tufted perennial varieties, which cannot withstand constant grazing, but provide sustenance for livestock on the move.

Wet season. There is rapid but temporary growth of grass immediately after the rains begin. Wet-rot and decay of the grass occur quickly, and insects such as termites often attack the grass shortly after it matures. Grazing in these areas will not exceed three months after the onset of the rains.

FILM LINK

Although Boran attempt to protect all their livestock, cattle are given first priority. During the dry season cattle in the desert lowlands need to be watered every second or third day. But on the high ground, where the grass is richer and more moist, cattle are usually taken to water only every fourth day. If a Boran herdsman sets out to the well before dawn and returns in the evening, he can locate his village up to six or seven herding hours from the well. The pattern followed in the film map is typical. The average moving speed of a herd of thirsty cows going to water is about three miles an hour. Cows return from water at about the same speed, as they are anxious to get back to their calves. This is faster than when moving to a temporary *fora* camp or herding in general, for then the cattle are not eager and the pace is that of the slowest animal. Water for any cattle unable to stand the trek to the well is carried back for them by pack donkeys or camels, or sometimes by women.

To manage their cattle more efficiently, the Boran divide their herds into dry stock and milking stock. If the *fora* camps have dry stock, they consist of young bulls, immature heifers, bullocks, and cows not giving milk. No young calves go on dry *fora*, but some animals coming into or going out of milk are taken along for the sustenance of the herdboys. Sheep and goats are also taken along as food, and unmarried or young married women (without children) may go to *fora*. Camps are temporary windbreaks and brush corrals. If the milking herd is on *fora*, as portrayed in the film map, the camp is located within a day's walk to water.

The Herdsmen's Changing Environment

Recent changes—both manmade and natural—have begun to alter the Marsabit environment. A new road links the capitals of Nairobi and Addis Ababa, dissecting Boran territory and bringing many changes. Governmental officials are instigating new campaigns for better range management, veterinary services, settlement and increased reliance on farming. Missionaries—Catholic and Protestant—are influencing converts to give up traditional beliefs and accept Western religion and education. Political tensions between Kenya and neighboring Somalia that long kept Boran pastoral areas insecure have been reduced, although intertribal cattle raiding continues. More serious than all this has been the recent drought and famine of 1972-1974.*

In the vicinity of Marsabit mountain, the drought was the worst in living memory. Some starvation occurred, hunger was widespread, and many people were forced to migrate out of the district. Others survived on the meager welfare doles of the churches

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*For fuller discussion of the drought in Kenya-Ethiopia, see Norman N. Miller, *Journey in a Forgotten Land* [NNM-1,2-'75], Fieldstaff Reports, East Africa Series, Vol. XI, No. 1,2, 1975.

Desert area near Marsabit.

and local government. The cattle population in the district was reduced from 200,000 in 1971 to some 145,000 in 1973. Probably about 20,000 cattle died in the drought and 30,000 were taken out of the district. About 4,000 camels are estimated to have perished around Marsabit. All the government grass and range reports for 1973-74 indicate declining and deteriorating range conditions. Overall, there was an increased reliance on sheep and goats, a trend that is disastrous for range conditions, because goats eat the grass stubble down to the roots. This not only destroys the present grass cover but destroys seed-bearing grasses for the future. "Goats make deserts," is an oft-repeated phrase among local government officers concerned with the environment.

In terms of stock movement, the drought created an even more perplexing picture. Illegal and unrecorded movements were causing havoc in the disease eradication program. Drought made the animals easy targets for several diseases and as herdsmen tried to move their emaciated cattle to better water and pasture they ran the risk of spreading disease into other herds. Most herdsmen do not report dead animals and disease checks across international borders are impossible.

Illegal stock movements strictly within Kenya are a shade less hazardous because Kenya has had national inoculation campaigns. Movement into southern Ethiopia or back and forth across the nearby Somali border spell more serious trouble. For example, Bovine Phenomena (CBPP) has been confirmed in the northeast corner of the district near Iloret, an area inhabited by Shangilla people. This portion of the district is under quarantine, but since the Shangilla are inveterate raiders and the feared enemies of the Boran, no one is certain that cattle thefts are not in fact causing cattle to be taken to and from infected areas. Cattle theft is the regional pastime and in some cases can take on the dimensions of gigantic Texas-style cattle raids, involving as many as 2,000 head. When stolen back, cattle may be seriously infected from across national borders.

Drought has caused another type of government setback. The settlement schemes which officials saw as a panacea for the management of cattle people have suffered a great deal. The two new settlements around the mountain, at Songaa and Gombo, each with some 60 new farmer-herdsmen, have suffered substantially. Many people lost all their cattle.

FILM LINK

Another scheme, at Badasa, which was discussed in the film by Iya Duba and the Range management officer, also met with severe setbacks. The local council misappropriated the $4,000 seed money to get the scheme started, and elephants knocked down all the new fence posts that were to hold the enclosure fences. According to the Range officer, the elephants found it "very relaxing to scratch their backs on the posts, and sometimes pulled the posts out just for sport."

In spite of settlement scheme problems, the familiar argument that the pastoralists would benefit from settled, "organized" ranch schemes is still prevalent. Government pressure focuses on an effort to fence in a large area with a permanent water source and then to get pastoralists to settle there and fatten their cattle for sale to traders and government marketing agents. This is in spite of the fact that during drought settlers become welfare cases while the "traditional" pastoralists are still able to move at least part of their herds to places where there is grass and water. Although collective settlements are not popular, the trend toward individual settled farming by some Boran pastoralists is nevertheless important. In 1952 there were some 20 Boran farmers around the mountains. Without exception they were alcoholics, possessors of the evil-eye, government employees or Christians, all equally distasteful to traditional Boran. Today nearly 1,000 Boran farms dot the mountain slopes.

Herdsmen's Future Alternatives

The major issue here, as in most arid rangelands across Africa, is how can the herding people continue to feed themselves. If they follow government wishes and settle into farming, or mixed farming and ranching schemes, they will become totally dependent on adequate rainfall. If they continue pastoral nomadism, moving to pockets of rainfall, they will have a better chance of basic survival but their overall well-being will not improve. Both options are hazardous. The sedentary farmer becomes a welfare case soon after his second crop fails. The pastoralist's family usually survives drought, but often at a fearful toll of young children and old people. Settlement or traditional nomadism are the only two viable options open to several million people spread throughout the dry savanna lands of Africa, including not only the Sahel but major portions of Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Botswana, and southwest Africa.

Whether there will be adequate food for human survival in these areas is by and large dependent on the rainfall and the man-made water systems. A few inches of rain a year make an enormous difference. Unfortunately no one knows, or can predict, what the "new" weather patterns will be. Across large geographical areas extremes seem to be commonplace and recurrent. These include record-breaking low rainfall in some areas, then occasionally record-breaking downpours and floods in nearby regions, often at totally unexpected times. Shortage of rain has been the main factor. Most wells, bore-holes, pans and dams, which are the focal point of human settlement, have simply dried up and the people near them forced to move on.

The overall dilemma is how to provide food to support a human population in marginal lands, and how to avoid misuse and deterioration of the land without abandoning it to clusters of government-imposed settlements. No solutions are easy and no strategy is without pitfalls.

Many observers argue that pastoralists should not or could not be induced to change their ways. The lack of economic incentive in the traditional society, the peoples' separateness, standoffishness, and disinterest in a money economy are all factors cited in the pastoralists' unwillingness to change. This, of course, is not entirely true, particularly for young pastoralists who have heard stories about or seen examples of a more "modern" way of life.

Most Boran want money, and some express strong wishes to settle in towns or on farms. Certainly this change poses a conflict, just as a major change in life style would for any human being. Pastoralists have been told of wealth earned in southern Kenya settlements and heard about how big ranches can withstand droughts by using wells, pipelines, and boreholes. These stories have great currency, particularly in drought times when Boran cattle are dying by the hundreds.

To force changes too quickly or to impose conditions that throw agriculturalists and pastoralists together, however, can be dangerous. Relations between people in these two life styles are traditionally hostile, although for East Africa this has probably been overstated. Certainly potential hostilities exist over resources essential to livestock, such as water rights or access to pastures. On the other hand, pastoralists increasingly want agricultural commodities to supplement their milk and meat diets and any trade for maize, tea, sugar, tobacco, or cloth brings the two ways together.

What future, then, do the pastoralists have? Probably none, at least none over the long run. Even now pressures to change are mounting. The "solution" suggested by government officials and missionaries is to settle the pastoralists, break up their total dependence on herds for food and make them dependent on a cash economy by selling dairy products or beef cattle. They argue that good range management, veterinary service, health clinics, schools, and police security are more important than permitting the wide-ranging nomads their free will.

How realistic are any of the settlement alternatives? How economical are they? In fact, no one is quite sure. The conventional wisdom of pastoralists in this area does not cover behavior changes under conditions of large-scale intervention. It has never happened. No one is sure what the new ranches with well-drilling programs, massive veterinary help, improved breeding programs, and alternative labor opportunities might mean. We do know that so far pastoralism in eastern Africa has not represented a very productive resource, nor has it made any sizable contribution to national economies.

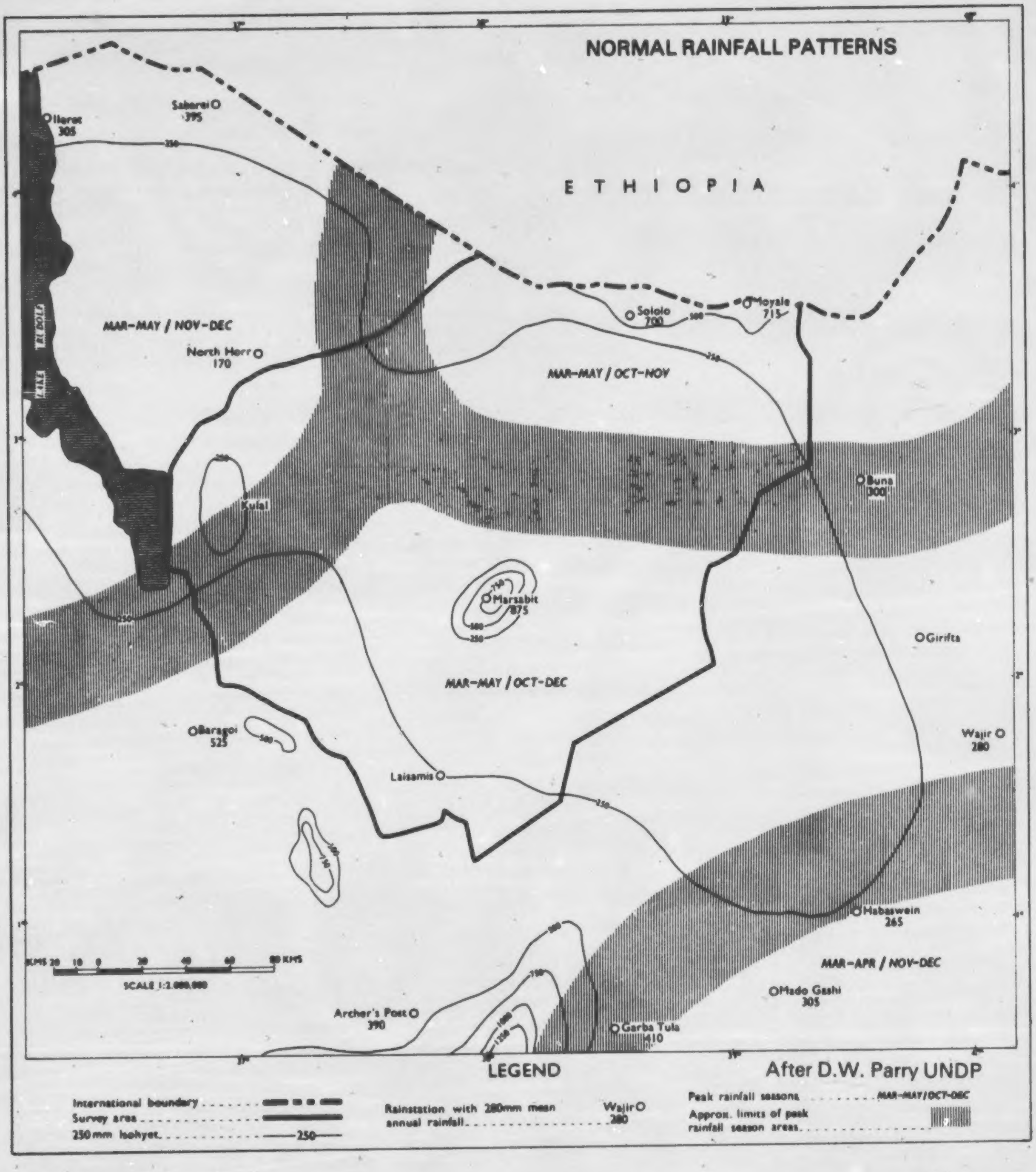
Ranching is certainly better in terms of improving livestock quality and productivity of meat. But is it better for the population involved? It should be emphasized that pastoralism as a way of life is radically different from any of the settled forms of cattle management. The modernized systems will disrupt the family structure, cause disintegration of the existing economic patterns, and have serious social implications—including some migration out of the area. Pastoralism is still the only system capable of keeping a population spread out over the dry lands. In any case, the disdain for farming runs deep, as the elder, Iya Duba, proclaimed:

> A farm is just earth, it can't move with a man, it's just dirt. If it rains there'll be food, if God withholds the rain, there's no harvest, and no food—the farmers are lost. Farming is hopeless, unless people strengthen their herds.... I haven't got a farm, I shall strengthen my herd.

CHART II

On the basis of our observations in Boranland, taking into account what the government and missionaries hope for, there emerge six basic strategies for pastoralists in the dry lands. Each has advantages and disadvantages.

Alternative	Advantage	Disadvantage
1. *Status Quo*. Permitting pastoralists to roam at will using whatever clinics and government facilities they wish.	No government expense; preferred by people, uses marginal land efficiently.	Security difficult, no social welfare services, no beef or dairy production.
2. *Status Quo* with more boreholes, piped water, pans, dams.	Increases survival chances for man and livestock.	High capital costs, maintenance problems; causes haphazard temporary settlements; potential violence at water points.
3. *Settlement* on individual ranches.	Encourages individual initiative; easy to organize; some services available.	Uneconomical, must be highly capitalized with loans; sets up privileged elite; destruction of equality in community; leads to destruction of wildlife; destroys basic genius of Boran to use the land.
4. *Settlement* on cooperative ranches.	Health care, social services available; police security good.	Destroys wildlife and basic genius of Boran to use the land.
5. *Partial settlement* with rotation, allowing cattle to graze in ranch schemes; camels, sheep, goats; rotation of family members with herds.	Health care, social service, some police security close to traditional pattern.	Land not fully utilized; difficult to organize.
6. *Settlement*, mixing herding and farming.	Health care, social services available; police security good.	Limited arable land; pastoralists make poor farmers; destroys basic genius of Boran to use the land; destroys wildlife.



NORMAL RAINFALL PATTERNS

ETHIOPIA
LAKE RUDOLF
Ileret 305
Sabarei 395
North Horr 170
MAR-MAY / NOV-DEC
Sololo 700
Moyale 715
MAR-MAY / OCT-NOV
Kulal
Buna 300
Marsabit 875
Girifta
MAR-MAY / OCT-DEC
Baragoi 525
Wajir 280
Laisamis
Habaswein 265
MAR-APR / NOV-DEC
Mado Gashi 305
Archer's Post 390
Garba Tula 410
250
500
750
1000
1250
KMS 20 10 0 20 40 60 80 KMS
SCALE 1:2.000.000
LEGEND
International boundary
Survey area
250mm Isohyet — 250 —
Rainstation with 280mm mean annual rainfall Wajir 280
Peak rainfall seasons MAR-MAY/OCT-DEC
Approx. limits of peak rainfall season areas ▨

After D.W. Parry UNDP

KENYA

4

Women

BORAN WOMEN

by JUDITH VON D. MILLER

> "Women are like wild animals."
> (i.e., not ruled by order or decorum)
>
> "Lusty males have two spears,
> both for spearing wild animals."
>
> Boran Proverbs

In Boran theory the value of a woman is twofold. As a bride she establishes ties between the men in her own family and the men in her husband's family. As a wife she bears children and keeps house. Her well-defined duties are quite separate from those of men. Traditional Boran law favors men; women are very much on the periphery of the established hierarchy of power.

To initial appearances Boran women may seem to be entirely at the mercy of their fathers (before marriage) or their husbands (after marriage). A closer look can reveal a different reality behind these appearances and innuendoes within the facts. A Boran woman enjoys a unique status and even power within the strict segregation of her role from that of men.

Daily Routine

Boran think of the days as beginning in the evening. Different times of day are named according to the activities performed then. *Galgalo*, for instance, means "the time the cows are brought in," or simply, "evening."

Evening. At dusk, as the cattle are brought home for the night, the "father" or owner of the herd inspects the animals for any that may be missing, diseased, or neglected. Then the women begin milking, and the role of the men becomes secondary. (Women who are menstruating or are "hot" from recent sexual intercourse do not take part in milking.)

Each wife is allotted by her husband a certain number of cows to milk. Women are not allowed to own cows.* The number of animals allocated to them may vary with the number of wives the husband has, the number of children each wife has, the amount of milk the cows are giving (which varies greatly with the seasons) and which cows have calves needing milk. Each wife controls the allocation of the milk from "her" cows. She stores the milk in her own house and apportions it as she sees fit, to the calves, the children, and other members of her own family.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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*They may, however, own sheep and goats, which are considered relatively insignificant (referred to as "tobacco," an easily available commodity in Boranland).

FILM LINK

FILM LINK

Daily Routine of Boran Women

Evening

6:00 - 8:00 — Milking cows
8:00 - 8:30 — Putting calves away for the night
8:30 - 9:00 — Preparing evening meal
9:30 - 5:00 — Sleeping, checking on fire, animals and children

Morning

5:00 - 6:00 — Fetching firewood, preparing morning tea, cleaning milk pots.
6:00 - 7:30 — Milking, preparing morning meal
7:30 - 10:30 — Housecleaning, household tasks
11:00 — Coffee-bean sacrifice and prayers

Afternoon

11:30 - 4:00 — Fetching water, working in fields, repairing houses, odd tasks, walks, naps, visits
4:30 — Preparing and cleaning milk pots

Boran know their cattle as named individuals, even to the lineage of each. Allotting the women specific animals to milk serves a practical purpose in terms of animal husbandry. Cows respond favorably to accustomed treatment by a familiar person; they may in fact not give milk to a stranger. They become used to being milked in a certain order. Women may actually call the animals over to be milked, one by one. Boran accord all their cattle very affectionate attention and show a close concern for the well-being of the herd. While milking, the women make crooning noises and further encourage the cows to give milk by rubbing their rumps or necks with soothing, rhythmical strokes.

While the women are milking, men may assist by holding back the suckling calves. This is a minor task, more relaxation than work. For the men, evening is the most enjoyable, peaceful, time of the day. Now they may rest from the day's herding and sit on a stool in the soft evening light, surrounded by their cattle, children, and wives.

A man's role in milking is purely symbolic. The first full bucket of milk is presented to the "father" of each herd by his senior wife. In an informal ceremony the father sips the milk, blessing it and signifying his ownership of it. He then returns the full bucket to his wife. By this act he symbolically relinquishes all the milk to be taken that evening into the hands of his wives.

This relinquishing of the milk reinforces an important aspect of the role and status of Boran women. The allocation of food is entirely in the hands of the women and no man may interfere. The decisions women make with regard to food are crucial ones, especially since food supplies are limited. How long should the calves be allowed to suckle? How much milk should be given to the children? Women want both their calves and their children to do well and must maintain a sharp eye to see that such decisions are made correctly. Then, too, a wife is allowed her whims, such as giving a favorite child extra sips of milk, or a foster child in her care slightly less. There are also traditional priorities to be considered, such as that milk should be given first to young children, then nursing mothers and pregnant women, and then to young men, before other family members.

Husbands honor their wives' rights to decide these matters, but it is a common subject of debate between husbands and wives, just as spouses in other cultures discuss how the money is to be spent. A husband will not give out milk without a wife's consent. Should visitors arrive in the wife's absence, the husband must take them to another house for refreshment where the woman is at home. If a man has two wives, he has two houses to go to. He will select one house or the other depending on the seniority of the wives and any practical matters that need consideration (such as the supply of milk in each house and the number of children of each wife).

Milk is shared freely in a Boran village. If the supply is plentiful, children may be given milk in any house. A guest is always offered tea boiled in milk, and if a woman runs out of milk she will send a child out to obtain some from a neighbor. If milk is not offered it indicates either that the guest is unwelcome or, more likely, that the household is without. Boran never beg for milk from each other, which would be unnecessary and childish since milk is always given out freely.

When the evening milking is finished (usually around 8:00) the men return the cows to the brush corrals for the night. Calves are tended by women. Very tiny calves are put into raised enclosures, older ones into mud-walled byres. Some calves are taken into the houses for the night to be de-ticked and fumigated by smoke from the fire. Calves require careful protection against marauding animals and the cold night air.

FILM
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For the women, evening is the busiest time of day. They must prepare the main meal immediately after milking. This is an informal occasion, but decorous, with polite manners important. After dinner, however, everyone settles down to rest. Boran sleep fitfully during the night; someone is always up and about. The wife checks the fire several times and the husband goes outside to see that the cattle are safe. The wife will also check on the children and the animals that are kept inside. (Some women have a favorite sheep which is kept in her house at night and petted and hand-fed during the day.)

Morning. Before the first light of day the animals become restive and the young men get up to tend them. The rest of the family may try to sleep later, but the noise of cattle and people moving about ultimately drives everyone up and out. If the grass is wet with dew, the young men will immediately turn the cattle loose just outside the corrals to benefit from the moisture. If there has been rain, the animals need not go out so soon, although they will be let out well before the sun dries the puddles. The men then clean the corrals by pushing the dung aside with a bone or a stick. If the weather is dry, the dung can be left to dry in the sun.

Women and children set out first thing in the morning to collect firewood, with which the house fires are restoked for preparation of morning tea. After a chilly desert night a warm fire and hot tea are well appreciated. Women then clean and sterilize the milk pots in preparation for morning milking, using the embers from the fire. This not only prevents the accumulation of bacteria but also keeps the milk pots hard and prevents leakage.

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Women milk the cows before they are taken out to pasture. Blessing the milk by the father of the herd is usually dispensed with in the mornings since the men are busy then. After milking, a little of the milk is drunk and the rest put aside by the women for later use. In dry seasons cows are milked only in the evenings.

Camels are milked three times a day. After the milking, the young men and boys take the cattle out to pasture.

Other morning tasks for women involve cleaning house and caring for children. Young children are always about and into things and must be watched closely. Mothers must keep a constant watch to see that they don't roll into the fire or step on thorns, fall into puddles or get bitten by snakes or insects. Houses must be swept and cleaned every day. Women pride themselves on their houses and are judged by the way they keep them. A good housekeeper sweeps her house daily, removes the cobwebs from the wooden frame and keeps everything inside in order and pleasingly decorated. Her domestic utensils may consist of a few metal cooking pots and enamelware cups, glasses, a wooden spoon, and a sharp knife. Sleeping mats must be set outside to air and clothes are cleaned periodically by smoking them over the fire. Men and women each clean their own clothes, washing them only when feasible, due to the constant shortage of water. Women sometimes fumigate their entire bodies by straddling the cooking fire. Sweet-smelling wood can be added to the fire to perfume the body.

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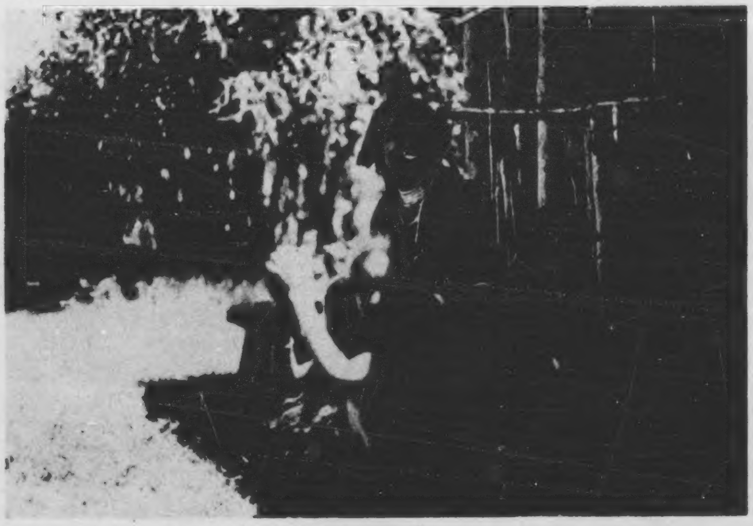
Around 11:00 in the morning, if circumstances permit, villagers gather for the daily coffee bean sacrifice. The father of the village (usually the wealthiest man) has his wife fry coffee beans in butter. Each person annoints his face and arms with a few drops of butter and is given a spoonful of fried beans in a cup of milk. The elders then say prayers for peace and help with any specific difficulties. The ceremony is referred to as a "sacrifice," not a meal, and of course has to be dispensed with when rations are short.

Afternoon. In a sense the day is now over until evening. Old people nap or sit in the shade. Women may go for water, carrying



FILM
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tin cans and sisal water pots, either on their own backs or strapped to the backs of donkeys (depending on the distance to the water point). Water must be fetched for domestic use and for the calves too small to graze with the herd. If the village is near a town, a government bore hole or town water tap may be available. Such water points are often regulated by officials and rationed at prescribed times of day. If water is to be obtained from a traditional well, the women will go there when the men are lifting water for the cattle. Women may assist men at the wells if necessary, by controlling the cattle waiting to drink or those which have finished drinking.

All tasks pertaining to cattle are the province of men. But Boran always consider the circumstances, and tradition is circumvented in times of need. If men are scarce, unmarried women or young childless wives may herd cattle or even live in cattle camps. Small girls may assist herdsboys if they don't travel too far from the village. The distance from home children are allowed to go depends on the amount of protection needed from raiders or wild animals and the vulnerability of the particular herd of cattle.

A woman does not like to leave home for long. She runs the risk of returning to disorder and disharmony which may have broken out in her absence. When their work is finished, women sit inside their houses at the hearth, the symbolic "place" of women. A man's "place" is the corral, and when relaxing a man will sit on a stool outside his house facing the corral, or under a nearby shade tree. Both men and women chew tobacco and take snuff, for relaxation and to ward off hunger pangs. Boran constantly ask each other for tobacco which, like milk, is given out freely. The exchange of pinches of tobacco is a part of peaceful social relations, and at any gathering of two or more Boran, tobacco pouches pass from hand to hand.

Late in the afternoon the women must begin cleaning and preparing the milk pots with burning embers. The pots are set outside the houses in visible readiness for the evening milking. (Traditional milk pots are made from giraffe hide, although recent government ordinances against the killing of giraffes have made the material more difficult to obtain.)

Boran Diet

To cattle people, only products from herds can be eaten with honor; any other diet implies inability to live properly off herds. Such people are not true Boran. In times of plenty, the herds can provide the Boran with a nutritious and varied diet.

Milk in all its forms is the staple food of the Boran. Some milk is always consumed immediately after milking. In times of plenty a young Boran man might drink ten pints of milk at a sitting. (This has not been possible in recent years as recurrent periods of drought have considerably reduced the once-excellent milk yield of Boran cattle.) Milk is served at any time of day, and is always

A hand-made milk container with lid.

Giraffe-hide milking bucket.

offered to guests. All Boran milk has a pleasant, smoky taste from the milk containers which are regularly sterilized with embers from a sweet-smelling wood. For variety, tea or herbs may be boiled in milk, and sour milk is infused with aromatic spices to improve its flavor. When milk is left over, the whey is drained off until the curds become solid, a process which takes three days or more. Curds are considered the tastiest form of milk and a delicacy to be served on special occasions or to honored guests. Curds eventually become solid and chewy, and may be carried in the pockets on walking journeys. Churning milk into butter is done less frequently today, possibly a response to recent droughts and milk shortages, but Boran occasionally purchase locally-processed butter in the town markets. In addition to its inclusion in the coffee-bean sacrifice, butter is considered healthy and women rub it into their skin and hair.

Besides milk, the food the Boran love best is honey. This is usually obtained in trade from the Warta, a hunting people who live in a partially symbiotic relationship with the Boran. They trade honey, or sometimes game meat, for milk, beef, and skins. The Boran ideal is "a land of milk and honey."

Boran rarely kill their cattle for food, for cattle are the measure of a man's wealth. Fresh meat is eaten only on festival occasions and special ceremonies. If an animal dies, its meat is dried and preserved as jerky to supplement the daily milk diet. Boran also bleed their cattle about once a month. The blood is taken from the jugular vein by piercing it with a small arrow and bleeding about 1.5 liters at a time from a single animal. The blood, eaten as a porridge or fried, is a nutritionally significant addition to the Boran diet, but it is relatively unimportant by volume.

During the two rainy seasons a year wild fruits become available in Boranland and are eaten sparingly. Boran women know a great deal about edible leaves and roots, but these are served only under near-starvation conditions. Vegetables are called "food for animals" and are disdained in a herding people's diet.

Boran are also reluctant to eat chickens or birds of any sort. A special taboo exists against eating wild guinea fowl, for they scratch about in the dust where they might be contaminated by pecking at the spot where a menstruating woman has urinated.

A radical change in diet has come about recently with the planting of maize. Farming is the last step in the breakdown of a herdsman's life; a Boran will farm only under extreme duress. Recent droughts have wiped out whole herds, however, forcing some Boran to plant maize to avoid starvation. Unlike the majority of tribes in Kenya, Boran do not like the taste of maize and their digestive systems are not used to it. The change for them has been radical indeed. Methods of preparing maize for eating have been learned from other tribes. The ears are roasted whole, or the grain ground and boiled into a coarse porridge. Cooled porridge is often sliced and fried.

Clothing, Jewelry, and Hair Styles

Clothes are worn for decency, warmth, and decoration. The Boran are proud of never having gone naked, a condition they regard with amused contempt in other tribes. Similar feelings are expressed for tribes who tattoo or otherwise disfigure themselves.

The traditional dress of a Boran woman is made of panels of goat skin. These are dyed red and joined with strips of black-dyed sheepskin to form a rectangle, the width reaching from ankle to armpit. The garment, called a *gorfa*, is wrapped one and a half times around the body and secured by a thong over one or both shoulders. A strap or rope is worn at the waist. The goat skins which compose the *gorfa* are dried, scraped, dyed, and greased. They are not tanned, and consequently are not pliable. When Boran women wore the *gorfa* every day, the upper half of the garment was commonly turned down over the hips, exposing the breasts, to make bending easier. Now only old women wear a *gorfa* every day, although most women keep one for ceremonial uses. Today women wear a more convenient wrapped dress of red and black cotton cloth available in town shops but expensive to buy. A separate square of cloth is worn over the hair or kept in readiness for a baby's sling.

Jewelry is made from aluminum, lead, copper, brass, ivory, or animal tails and is worn to signify status, condition, or just for adornment. Young women wear a lot of jewelry as anklets, necklaces, armlets, toe, ear and finger rings. Some of the aluminum used in making jewelry comes from Italian war planes which crashed during World War II in the British-Italian campaign. Most striking are the dozens of strands of aluminum beads worn around the neck in varying lengths. Beads of amber or polished wood are also worn.Such adornments are the trappings of youth and beauty; old women give their jewelry away. Boran do not keep stores of valuables which would impede the nomadic way of life.

A woman's hair is styled to signify her status (i.e., child, nubile, married or widowed). All the adult styles are elaborate and consist basically of dozens of braids lying close to the head at the crown and fluffed out at the ends at about shoulder length. Such long hair styles are unusual for African women, most of whom wear their hair shorter or bound up. Little girls' hair is shaved at the crown and the tonsure allowed to grow out as they reach puberty. Butter fat is used to dress the hair.

Traditional and New Work Patterns

In the Western world, solutions to social inequities between men and women have been sought by dissolving role distinctions between the sexes. But equal rights for women is the last thing a Boran woman wants. What power she has survives because of the complete segregation of her duties from those of men.

Film Biography

Orge Adi Duba, aged about 50, appears in *Boran Women* with her grandson on her knee. She is the sister of the government-appointed Chief Jillo. She was born in Sololo, some 200 miles north of Marsabit, near the Ethiopian border. Her father was a chief in the early British administration. She has two sons and a daughter plus six grandchildren. In her several interviews with the filmmakers she evidenced a respect for the past as well as a very liberal point of view regarding education. She knows a great deal about Boran history and is probably one of those women who is "listened to by men." Some of her words:

I still enjoy going out to collect firewood and water. This is the role of women . . . . I will do it until I must walk with a stick. Farms are good. In the past we didn't understand the value of the land.

We are happy to have many children. Some people have very many–one mother has 20–and that is good. Boran are only interested in those who give birth to many. Many daughters are good as they bring in boys as relatives. We can't limit the number of our children; that is the choice of God. We have nothing to do with that. I'm not surprised to hear of the "pill." One shouldn't limit children; they will help in the future. Even though I am an old woman I would like to have another child. In case of drought you must depend on your relatives–they will support you. But in case of too many children, you must depend on yourself.

Boran matrons building a house.

Building a Boran House

Houses are built around frames of sticks which have been treated and bent. The floor plan is first sketched out in the dust; then the frame is erected. A woman is considered lazy for using part of an old house in building a new one. Only the large treated poles which are the main structural support are saved during a move and used as long as they last. The house is about eight feet high at the center, divided into two main parts—living quarters near the door, sleeping quarters toward the rear. The sleeping quarters are divided into two, one alcove for the parents, another for the children. In very large houses there is a third alcove for calves. The roof is thatched with bundles of long grass or with woven grass mats as large as five feet square. The thatching stops a foot off the ground to prevent insects climbing into it. Grass roofs need to be reinforced with hides during the rains to prevent excessive dripping. A trench dug around the house carries off rain water. Houses are positioned upwind of and facing the cattle corral, in a semicircle. This enables people inside to keep an eye on the stock and prevents dirt from the corral being blown into the houses.

Housebuilding and maintenance. Because of the constant desert wind, roofs need rethatching and house frames need repairing often. Only women are allowed to build houses or repair the frames, although men may help with the thatching (so that women need not risk exposing their pudenda to men standing underneath). Building a new house is always done by wives, never unmarried women (who may only assist a wife). Assigning housebuilding to women is one way to ensure the circulation of bachelors between villages, and puts a subtle pressure on single men either to marry or to keep moving from village to village. When they leave their family homes they do not have a permanent roof over their heads until a wife builds them one. Bachelors must either depend on the hospitality of age-mates, clansmen, and relatives or live with the herders in cattle camps. Young men are therefore continually on the go, walking across the deserts between villages, keeping a watch for enemies and searching out new grasslands and areas where rain has fallen. Maintaining this information relay system between Boran villages is crucial to Boran well-being and is the single most important task of young, unmarried men.

FILM LINK

Boran villages are moved whenever grass or water conditions make it necessary for the health of the cattle. The decision as to where and when to move is one in which women have a subtle control, because of their role as housebuilders. A dissatisfied wife can always refuse to dismantle and rebuild the house. Theoretically men make such decisions. But Boran villages operate as democracies and ultimately everyone's wishes are considered. To leave some people dissatisfied would undermine the peace of the village and indirectly affect the "Peace of Boran."

In earlier days, villages were relocated once every few weeks. Today, many Boran have been forced to set up semi-permanent villages near towns or maize fields. Such villages are still moved periodically, for reasons of hygiene, at intervals of several months. People also vacate the site of a calamity, such as a murder or a cattle theft. A new house is also built if someone dies in a house.

Houses are decorated inside with objects made by women. Walls are often hung with pieces of cowhide sewn with cowrie shells, and milk pots woven of sisal and mud (also decorated with cowrie shells). Boran judge the industry and talent of a woman (and the wealth of her husband) by the number and beauty of such home ornaments. These are placed directly opposite the door where they will be immediately visible to visitors. Women also weave sisal sleeping platforms on wooden frames, while men carve wooden stools which provide the only other home furnishings. Carving is traditionally a man's task, while weaving is for women.

Maize Production. All tasks having to do with maize carry the stigma of foreign ways. Families who must rely on maize at the same time advertise the fact that they have been unable to survive as herdsmen. Most of the tasks having to do with maize have fallen to Boran women. As is the custom elsewhere in Africa, men do the plowing. But women take care of planting, weeding, harvesting, storage, and preparation of maize for cooking.

Trading. When drought or famine or any extreme outside pressure threatens communal well-being, Boran women have been the first to break with tradition to seek and adopt alternatives. They are the first to become traders, and to sell milk, jewelry, skins, and milk pots. It must be emphasized that these are desperation measures, and even when women undertake them to save a family from starvation, men still disapprove. Boran do not keep stores of valuables, as say in Persia or India. When they sell jewelry, it comes directly off their persons from that which is normally worn every day.

Boran women are the first to adopt new ideas and new ways of doing things because they are the least established in the hierarchy of power and the least favored by tradition. In any society those who are the most established, who stand to gain the most

The market in Marsabit.

from the system, are the most impervious to change. A Boran elder with a large herd of cattle is the most conservative person in the community. But women, whose position is marginal, have more to gain from innovation, or at least not as much to lose by change.

Health and Survival

The Boran live in a harsh land. Two rainy seasons a year are expected, but these often fail and the land remains dry and unproductive. Availability of milk and meat is irregular. Periodically several thousand Boran are on the verge of starvation. A few become permanent wards of missionaries or dependent on charity for food. For the majority, however, seasonal food shortages are expected and are dealt with by several means.

Drought. When drought conditions begin, first calves and then weak bulls are slaughtered. People are still nutritionally stable in the early part of a drought and can deal with shortages simply by tightening their belts. But at the end of a long drought, when herds are depleted and food has been in short supply for many weeks, those who are most vulnerable fall prey to diseases and die.

The most vulnerable sectors of the Boran population are infants, preschool children, pregnant and lactating women, and the aged. Cattle must be moved often during a drought in order to survive on the small amounts of grass and water available. Vulnerable people who cannot keep moving must be left behind, even though separation from the herd means they will have less to eat. This happens without complaint from those left behind. Boran know survival of the cattle is crucial to them all, and the rigors of drought are expected. Missionaries provide some relief to those who must be left behind. Others have to use their ingenuity to find new means of survival.

Rains and Disease. When the rains do finally come they bring other problems. The cooler weather means illness for many. During the rainy season, pneumonia, malaria, tuberculosis, and dysentery are common. Those who live near towns have access to government health clinics. But the seriously ill prefer to stay at home and want to die there, near the corral. A Boran in good health has a special distaste for towns, especially during the rains, when a desert outpost is a particularly unpleasant place. Run-off water in the streets contaminates the wells with human filth. Flies and mosquitoes breed excessively and offensive smells from wet manure heaps waft through muddy streets impassable to vehicles. While Boran houses are not much good in a heavy downpour, and the people must huddle inside under skins to stay dry, the village is still preferred over the town. Moreover, peoples' spirits pick up during the rains, despite the discomforts. Soon the grass will begin to grow, the cattle will have water and food, and life will become better for all.

Social Relations Between the Sexes

In practice, the Boran live in a participatory democracy in which everyone has a say. In theory, a ritual grading system gives arbitrary powers to men. A father is said to "own" his family and herds and may dispose of them as he sees fit. But ownership connotes care, protection, paternalism, and responsibility. A father-owner may dispose of a daughter, a son, or a cow only after discussion with others who may be affected. Decisions are made by consensus and persuasion rather than by force.

Men meet formally for the purpose of making decisions; women are present only as witnesses, if they come at all. Women have developed the practice of doing household tasks near where the men are meeting. As the men talk, the women eavesdrop and begin singing "work songs" which reveal succinctly what they think of the decisions being made.

Economic decisions are often made after consultation with women, for they know best whether removal of food or livestock for a ritual will bring hardship to the family. Decision-making requires a sound knowledge of Boran ritual and historical precedents. Men listen when women offer information along these lines, although to ask publicly for a woman's opinion would be shameful. Thus intellectual ability can determine the degree of separation between male and female.

An important distinction between male and female roles is that men belong to age-sets and pass through several *rites de passage* throughout a lifetime. Women do not belong to age-sets and their roles are not highly differentiated by age. In decision-making, this

Film Biography

Salessa Iya, aged about 30, is the daughter of Iya Duba, the village headman. She appears in the film's morning scene cleaning a milk pot with burning embers and later thatching a granary, pounding maizemeal and serving evening tea to her daughter and husband. Arero, her husband, is around 45. He works as a general handyman at the District Commissioner's *boma;* his income enables Salessa to have an extra dress and plenty of sugar, tea, and cooking utensils. But Salessa is expected to share milk, coffee beans, tea, and sugar on request from others in the village. Although Salessa is young and beautiful, she is considered as being in the same age-grade as her husband and is accorded the respect due to an older woman, instead of being sought after by young men. She has four children, two boys and two girls, the eldest only nine. Her daughter, as seen in the film, helps Salessa with domestic chores.

enables women to be used as mediators among men, for men's loyalties to age-mates make their opinions more biased. The disadvantage for women is that they do not have a collective identity, somewhat like a social club, such as strengthens the bonds between men within age-sets.

Women often discuss cattle with their menfolk. The experience of an older woman is especially valued and her words about cattle-raising attended to by men. A herdsman depends greatly on the willing, cooperative labor of his wife. It would be foolish to ignore her counsel. At the same time, a man should be quietly certain of his dominance over his wife. Gentle speech, generosity, and tolerant understanding are expected of a proper man. A husband who abuses or beats his wife and children is within his rights, but by doing so he admits the failure of his moral authority. Boran laugh at blusterers and avoid the quarrelsome; even boasting is largely restricted to certain formal and mostly ritual occasions. Preserving the "Peace of Boran" is of paramount importance, between husbands and wives, age-mates, clansmen, and Boran everywhere.

Woman As Symbol

A woman's role in preserving the peace is central and crucial. Her symbolic "place," the hearth, is the center of domestic life and the symbol of order and sociability. A pile of cut firewood and a well-swept hearth signify a good wife and a peaceful household. When villages are moved, a hearth is one of the first things to be rebuilt. The father brings the fire (kindled outside the village) to the hearth and the wife puts on the wood. Ideally the fire should not go out until the village is moved again. Even at night the fire is kept smoldering.

Boran rituals are an exclusive male responsibility. But women must be present on certain occasions and take important (although not lead) roles. These roles—the mother of a first-born son at his naming ceremony, the wife at a husband's *gadamoji**—are inconspicuous but ritually vital.

Rain and fertility are also associated symbolically with women. When the rains come, calves are born and milk becomes plentiful. In ritual ceremonies, women control the milk for saying blessings and the butter for annointing.

Certain objects are associated with women and have ritual uses concerned with women, such as decorative wall hangings, milk pots, and smoking frames. Certain tasks are principally for females, again with symbolic significance, such as housebuilding, firewood collecting (not *cutting*, which is a man's task), water fetching, milking, and weaving. The accent is on complementarity: it is the job of men to kindle a fire with dry sticks, but the job of women to stoke the glowing brands into bright fire with the kindled sticks.

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*Age-grade ceremony in which an older man quits active service and enters a time of peaceful old age.

Life Cycle

Throughout their lives women are undifferentiated as to age. A baby girl is in a sense treated with the same respect as is a grown woman. Woman is woman, whether young or old, and certain traditional courtesies toward them are required from men. The birth of a girl, however, is not the occasion for special rejoicing or celebration as is the birth of a boy. Girls do have naming ceremonies, but these are less important and elaborate than the ceremonies for boys. It does happen that when a man has waited a long time for a child, the first-born will be given special consideration even though it is a girl. Like a son, she will be given a heifer, called *handuura*, or "navel," which, if she were a boy, would become the nucleus of a herd. Because a woman is not allowed to own cattle, the heifer will go eventually to the herd of her husband.

Childhood. All children are allowed to develop personal autonomy and have ample opportunity to learn from their peers what they do not learn from their parents. In time, parents become competitive, joking partners to their children instead of authority figures. Even when small, children are rarely punished physically; parents control children more by verbal admonitions and threats, or by withholding subtle psychological rewards.

Jobs of responsibility are given to children at an early age. It is common to see a six-year-old carrying an infant on her back, or a small boy herding a flock of goats. Girls help their mothers as soon as they are able, and begin to pound maize, gather firewood, or work in the fields at an early age. There are fewer at-home tasks for boys and those who stay around the villages seem to have more time for play than do the girls.

Boys are allowed to run naked, or at least "bottomless," until puberty. But girls, from about age three, wear long dresses like those of their mothers and are made to sit with their legs together straight out in front of them. It is common to see one toddler tapping another on the knee, indicating she should straighten her legs. Girls also wear more modest renditions of their mothers' jewelry.

Children of both sexes make up games to play together. A type of jacks in which stones or wild fruit are placed on top of outstretched hands, is very popular. By a flick of the wrists the stones are thrown into the air and the hands quickly turned palms up to catch them. The stones are thrown up again, the hands flipped back-sides up and the stones land, hopefully, on the backs of the hands. Boran play other games similar to Western games with marbles, but using stones. Also popular (even for men) is bombing beetles with spittle and (for small children) molding animals out of damp soil and playing "cattle corral" or "homestead." Boran are adept at creating complicated cats' cradles with string. Boys throw spears, wrestle, and race.

Young Boran girl (pre-puberty).

One girls' game involves several players sitting in a line on the ground, legs straight out in front. The leader taps the equivalent of "eenie-meenie-miny-mo" along the row of knees; when she "lands," that knee must be tucked under. This continues until all the knees are tucked under. Then, one at a time, the players stand up. If her knees crack, they say the girl is good. If they don't, there is much giggling and the girl is said to be a donkey who will carry other peoples' burdens.

Now that some Boran have settled near towns and mission stations, some of the boys have begun to go to school, but it is still unusual for girls. Parents have more fears for their girls than for their boys regarding the dangers of increased freedom away from traditional constraints. A few Boran girls in Marsabit had been through primary school. Upon graduation they could not find jobs as primary school teachers or nurse's aides, and so got married and returned to village life. Such experiences reinforce the parents' belief that education is only for boys. Moreover, sending daughters to school makes more work for the mothers at home. And education for too many children, boys or girls, upsets the balance of Boran life, for the herds cannot be cared for properly when children are in school.

Adolescence. Unmarried girls have no allowed sexual experience whatsoever and are rigorously forbidden to men.* An unmarried girl bearing a child causes a considerable social disturbance (a fatherless child belongs to no one, inherits from no one). The social relationships that develop from sexual activity are important and not the sexual act itself. Thus the rules are interpreted in terms of what would or would not create a social disturbance. Causing an unmarried girl to become pregnant is considered incestuous and is as sinful as spilling the blood of another Boran. The child of an unmarried girl is thought to pollute the herd of the girl's father. Her punishment can be as severe as banishment or ritual death. For the man involved, mystical reprisals are expected to strike him.

Sexual noninvolvement for girls is required between the time of the first menstruation and marriage. Prepubertal girls are allowed to play sex games with little boys, "whose semen is like water." It is not even expressly forbidden for a young man to have sexual relations with a prepubertal girl. But if found out, he would be jeered at for behaving like a little boy. Otherwise, parents do not educate their children specifically in sexual matters. Sex discussions are considered in bad taste. "No one needs to teach them," say the parents; "God has taught them." Children learn about sex from older children and from gossip.

Marriage. Girls marry when they are "hot," that is, when they are fully developed physically and mentally, and able to bear and take care of healthy children. Girls usually marry around 16 to 18; men marry about ten years later, after a period of "warriorhood." All women's marriages are arranged, as are all men's first marriages. A man may take as many wives as he can afford, that is, whose offspring he can feed even during hard times. Most men have one wife; some have two, and only the very rich have more than two.

It is difficult to tell whether a girl has veto power over the choice of her husband. In theory she has no choice; in practice, if she were to object violently the marriage probably would not take

Chief Jillo's wife and children.

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*Paul Baxter reported the case of an unattractive, poor, and unmarried girl impregnated by a young hersman. Her elder brother wanted her to marry the herdsman. On hearing of the situation, a policeman intervened and offered to make a token bride-wealth payment for the girl. She went off with him never to be seen again. As for the herdsman, he was considered socially dead and no longer a Boran. His age-mates gave him a proxy burial in a hyena hole, placing his broken sandals and staff on top. Despite his denials of his death and his threats to call in the District Commissioner, the young man was thereafter ostracized by everyone in the area except his own mother.

place. Since marriage is an absolute necessity and has very little to do with sexual attraction or love, a girl usually accepts her parents' choice with no protest. She has had plenty of time to get used to the idea and may have been betrothed when she was as young as five years old. Although she will probably not learn her betrothed's identity until she comes of age, all children know they will get married.

Brides are selected for their health, strength, disposition, and (lastly) beauty. According to proverb, "One studies the mother before asking for the hand of the daughter." Boran also study the social position and wealth of the father of the bride. Important men are always fending off would-be sons-in-law, while poor men must hunt for husbands for their daughters. Daughters are considered very useful, for marrying them off is a way of acquiring connections with wealthy families and more male in-laws.

A marriage proposal can take months to pass through its several stages. Its duration depends on the prestige of both families and the interest taken by the girl, her parents, her brothers, and her suitor. If objections are held by any of these people the negotiations will be prolonged. Brothers especially are given a decisive vote in deciding upon a sister's husband. They are interested in the bridewealth a sister brings to their family; this will be available to them to offer their own brides. They are also interested in the new male in-laws, as to how much cattle and wealth they own.

Traditionally Boran bridewealth payments are fixed, not competitive, unlike those of Bantu-speaking peoples in other parts of Africa. Payments consist of specific types of cattle and customary amounts of tobacco, coffee beans, cloth, tea, sugar, and enamelware. The transfer of cattle may continue over a period of years after the marriage, according to convenience so as not to deprive families. Bridewealth is not considered all-important in a marriage, but enough cattle to support a wife is essential. A husband may even move to his new wife's village or become herd manager for her father until stock can be conveniently transferred. Long-term stock management is more important than immediate stock increase. Muslim Boran, who tend to be wealthier than other Boran, may make greater than customary bridewealth payments and have larger wedding celebrations. Bridewealth among Muslim Boran is negotiated, not fixed, and can be competitive.

The marriage ceremony takes place at the bride's homestead and is very simple. Only the parents of the bride, and the bride and groom, take part. The groom comes as an independent man accompanied by his age-mates. His parents play no part in the ceremony.

Boran marry for life. No divorce is possible (although separation and living with lovers happens occasionally). Desertion is rare. Some women have been known to run away from their husbands, but any children born thereafter still belong to the husband. All children are the property of (and will inherit from) their mother's rightful husband, no matter what their biological parentage. A widow may be inherited by her brother-in-law, but may not marry again. Widowed women sometimes set up house with a lover, but their offspring may inherit only from the herd of the deceased husband.

Boran will marry women from the Gabbra (who are considered cousins), but not from Sakuye or Warta and not Boran blacksmiths. They also do not like to marry women from "flat-faced" farming tribes, mainly because such women do not understand stock management. They also say farming women will bear children with ugly faces. However, they may arrange a daughter's marriage into a farming tribe to assure access to crops in times of drought, or a place to stay when visiting a town. Between herding tribes great hostilities exist and Boran rarely marry competitors for pasture, such as the Rendille or Somali. (Rendille are said to stink; similar uncomplimentary things are said about the Somali.) A poor daughter, or one with many sisters, or one who has become pregnant before marriage, may be given in marriage to other herding tribes for want of another alternative.

Immediately after marriage (if the situation permits*), the wife is taken to her mother-in-law's house for a period of severe tutelage. During this probation or induction period the bride is tested as a wife. This is often a lonely and miserable time for a new wife. Her first sexual experience can be more rape than anything else, as she is probably completely untutored and inexperienced in such matters. She is separated for the first time from her own mother and family. Even her husband must avoid being near the bride's mother. The bride is not allowed control of any cows during the induction period and so temporarily has no status. This period lasts for six months, or until the village is shifted. Then the bride may build her own house and life begins to look brighter for her.

Sex and Society. Sexual attraction and love have little to do with marriage. But with married women, and all men, extramarital sex is a general pastime. Herding peoples have very fluid families, and men are often gone for long periods of time. Social stability is ensured by allowing discreet extramarital sex. Such flexibility within the marriage bond is another example of Boran social adaptability.

Since men do not marry until the mid-twenties or later, and have no access to unmarried girls, they look to the wives of other men for sexual activity. This must be done within required codes of etiquette and with extreme discretion, so as not to offend the husband, and preferably not to be discovered at all. Boran handle sexual relationships with such tact it is difficult to observe them doing so. Moreover, sexual attraction and love are considered

*If a man cannot afford to pay the total bride price, he does not have the right to remove the bride. She remains with her family, the new husband living there with her, perhaps working for her father, until the bride price is paid. Or, if the bride is very young, she and the groom may live in her village until she has been properly trained by her own mother.

delicate subjects. People do not discuss their personal affairs openly. Women will discuss sex with other women of similar age and status, but not across generations.

Within the accepted practice of adultery many rules must be observed. Besides the codes of etiquette there are also rules applying to the availability and nonavailability of certain married women. Intercourse with a close clanswoman is regarded as incestuous and sinful. The wronged husband may beat his wife, but must wait for mystical punishment to strike the offending clansman (perhaps as fits of the shakes or loss of muscular control in old age). Men may not engage in sexual intercourse with married sisters of their father's or their son's age-mates. This simplifies relationships within a household where a father's young second wife is out of bounds to a son of his first wife, thus keeping "sons" and "mothers," "fathers" and "daughters" in reasonably distinct sociological territories.

Extramarital sex is especially prevalent among age-mates and their wives. A man refers to his age-mate's wife as "our wife" and when visiting expects to be offered her as a gesture of welcome on the first night. If the offer is accepted, the host vacates the house in deference to his age-mate. Such open practices are not considered adultery; a husband is secretly flattered by an age-mate's attention to his wife or wives. It is when seduction happens without the husband's invitation that age-mates are allowed to claim compensation from each other. Even then they are unlikely to do so, out of respect for the "old boy" network, unless the offense is repeated or blatant. In the game of love, discretion is the key. It is bad to be caught disobeying the rules, for it causes hatred between people who should love and honor each other, and disturbs the "Peace of Boran."

Adultery is liable to a fine, commonly in cattle. The offending man is usually instructed to slaughter a heifer and/or to pay the husband a few shillings. If the husband refuses to accept payment the money is passed to the care of the elders until the man sees reason. He usually does in time. Many adultery cases come to light because age-mates protect each others' interests by informing on unfaithful wives.

Special relationships between two unrelated persons occur often. These may be between two men, two women, or man and woman. They are based on liking, love, or fondness and have considerable social importance. To qualify as a respected "special relationship" it must be reciprocal. Between members of the opposite sex, "special relationships" do imply sexual relations. In such cases general social recognition is given the lovers, although to flaunt the relationship would be insulting to everyone. "Special relationships" between members of the same sex do not imply sexual activity; lesbianism is unknown and homosexuality very

A young secondary student working for the film crew wrote about sexual practices of young Boran men:

When boys reach twelve to fifteen years of age, young men no longer hide secrets about sex from them. Thus the boys learn about sex and sometimes discuss a girl's beauty with young men. The boys learn from the young men how to approach a lady when wanting sexual intercourse.

The Boran have a specific way of approaching women. If one does it the wrong way it may result in serious accusation and fines according to Boran tradition and customs. So boys are usually very careful of the words they use in approaching a woman. If one is afraid he may ask a friend of his own age to approach the woman for him. Or he may ask a woman who is a friend both to him and the woman he wants, so that she may approach the woman for him.

But for the most part boys learn by discussing among themselves what to say. If a boy is unsuccessful with a woman he has to go back and tell the story to his friends and ask for advice. When boys gather together they discuss the beauty of women and how to get them, and how to convince rude women and how to convince clever women.

Clockwise from top: Threshing and winnowing grain; Cooking utensils; Hitching a ride to the well; Young Boran girls with tonsure haircuts.

rare and mocked if discovered. Sometimes affection in middle age brings relationships of mutual help; people visit each other often but don't necessarily engage in sex.

Open displays of affection are rare between spouses but often occur between man and mistress. An able mistress may control a significant part of her lover's estate (cows may be given outright to mistresses). In theory it is forbidden to allow a mistress more cows than a wife controls, but the issue becomes clouded when the wife is childless and the mistress fertile.

Motherhood and Family Life. A woman changes her hairstyle upon marriage and at the birth of her first child, and all who come in contact with her must modify their behavior accordingly. This probably has a lasting effect on a woman's personal development. Another important psychological adjustment is the alienation implicit in her role as a wife and mother. A wife is referred to as an in-law who belongs to her father's family. Her children belong to her husband's family, and thus even to them she is an outsider. The Boran conception of family is a group of males surrounded by alien females who link them to other families.

Relationships between co-wives have their tense moments, aggravated in part by the birth of children. The senior wife is supposedly privileged, with rights to more cows. The issue comes into question if she does not bear the first son or the most children. Barren women adopt children to offset these inequities. The mother of twins is feared and respected; it is thought only animals have multiple births—any human doing so must be a strange and special person.

Mothers nurse babies for two to three years, or at least until the child is able to walk. During this time the mother is not supposed to have sexual intercourse, an effective family planning technique. Any other method of limiting the number of children is frowned upon. Child mortality is high in Boranland. Women want to have many children, for more help around the house and with the herds.

Mothers are very affectionate with their children, particularly baby boys, who receive a great deal of fondling and kissing. Children play a central role in the Boran household. Toddlers are always around and in the middle of things.

The family undergoes many changes as it matures. Death of the older husband before the wife is common. Then the eldest son assumes authority and the widowed mother becomes his dependent. He becomes senior to her in all political and ceremonial matters.

Social Continuity in Death. At death, a woman is buried in the cattle corral and, like a man, her sandals, walking stick (and milk pot) are broken and placed on her stone grave. If she dies in a house, it is dismantled. Her afterlife, it is believed, depends on what kind of a husband she has had, for she must follow him. If he has sinned, he will not go to heaven, "but must wait." If he is good, he is thought to go to a heaven where there is an abundance of water, milk, honey, and grass. A man may take his wife to heaven if she has been good; otherwise he will go there alone. No new wives are taken in heaven.

KENYA

5

Beliefs

HARAMBEE ("Pull Together")

by Norman N. Miller

"Harambee" means "pull together." It is the slogan developed by President Jomo Kenyatta as a rallying call for an independent Kenya. "Harambee" is chanted at political gatherings, intoned as a greeting, and broadcast on the radio as a benediction. Its application is both economic and political. It means "work hard," "put your back into it," "come together in toil." It means "pull together as one people," "join in unison as one nation," "forget tribal allegiances," and "be aware of Kenya as your nation." The fact that there was a need for such a political chant is all too apparent to anyone who has watched the birth and early growth of independent Kenya. Political integration is the big issue for this young nation.

Although outwardly stable, Kenya's independent period has been fraught with internal tensions, particularly between the two major ethnic groups: the Kikuyu of central Kenya, from whom Jomo Kenyatta comes, and the Luo who live in the west around Lake Victoria. These two groups and their political allies have dominated Kenya politics since independence in 1963. Unlike other states, however, intense rivalries, blatant favoritism and occasional violence have not as yet wrenched the nation apart. This is partly because of economic expansion which has been the hallmark of Kenya's first twelve years. Nairobi has become the communications center of eastern Africa and an important trade center comparable to the open city of Hong Kong for enterprising and aggressive black capitalism. Kenya is the only Third World country to have a major United Nations headquarters, the U.N. Environment Programme, and is an important meeting place for tourists and businessmen coming from the Far East,Europe, and America.

Kenya's growth is largely due to Kenyatta's enormous presence. He is the key to stability, and his political adroitness at managing the changing internal coalitions is a prime reason for the economic growth of the country. The developments of the first twelve years are all the more impressive in contrast to events in every country surrounding Kenya.

Uganda under President Amin has fallen into abject chaos and wanton murder; the Sudan just recently resolved the smoldering, race-based revolution going on in its southern provinces. Ethiopia's government, so inept and unaware of its starving masses, fell to a military government that quickly began executing its own revolutionary leaders. Somalia, since its military coup, continues its vitriolic tirades feeding on anti-Kenya sentiments and making claims to Kenya territory. The country threatens to reopen the nasty desert border war that bled both nations between 1963 and 1969. Tanzania to the south pursues its austere brand of African Socialism that in recent years has failed to adequately feed the country. The situation following the recent East African drought placed Tanzania in a position to need more grain and famine relief than any nation in the world except India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. The picture is one of either economic or political chaos on all borders of Kenya. No one argues that life is ideal in Kenya, but by contrast to the rest of eastern Africa most Kenyans are better off. Given this background what are the chances for political integration? What are the issues?

First, Kenya has some forty-two ethnic groups, spread throughout some forty administrative districts. The ethnic groups range in size from the Kikuyu and Luo at about one and a half million each, down to small groups such as the Boran of some 30,000. The main issues concern allegiance and ethnicity, reduction of cultural barriers and such basic matters as civic obedience and cooperation with the government, and acceptance of its authority.

Every African state strives to unify its people around a national ideology and national goals. The independence period for most states is an exciting, purposeful time when leaders rally the people with cries for freedom. Less exciting, more mundane years follow, when cries of unity are not so compelling because there is no visible enemy to be vanquished. Frustration and cynicism begin to characterize the common man while the more educated elite often plunge into fierce competition over status and economic position.

Integration would be a problem for Kenya even if 42 ethnic groups did not exist in its artificially-drawn state borders.* All Kenya's borders dissect ethnic groups as a result of drawing-room diplomacy in the early colonial period. Each region is a mosaic of

New government office building, Marsabit.

*There are over 900 tribal groups in Africa and more than 300 language groups.

people, few of whom share a common language or cultural history. Two historic factors underlie Kenya's problems of integration, not the least of which is political allegiance based on tribal groupings. The Kikuyu, the largest tribe, have outstripped nearly all other groups in economic development, entrepreneurial activities and general aggressiveness. Usually they are highly receptive to education, new crops and new modes of making an income. In recent years Kikuyu have migrated into many parts of Kenya as settlers, traders, and small businessmen. Their achievements put local people into a difficult, competitive position and cause a tightening of tribal allegiances. Secondly, tribal groups in Kenya gained local political strength because national movements which integrate the people across ethnic lines have been slow to develop at the grassroots. During Mau Mau, 1952-1959, the Emergency Act imposed by the colonial government prohibited any national organizations. Only very localized groups could emerge. The ban, coming as it did at the height of the nationalistic period, encouraged wealthy tribal elders to take up leadership positions based partially on their traditional legitimacy, while younger men without strong tribal allegiances were deprived of influence. As the national political structure developed it grew out of these localized power groups. Bossism and "localism" emerged instead of national or even large regional allegiances. Patron-client networks emerged and in fact contributed to national stability.

Unifying Influences	Disunifying Influences
Kenya nationalism; black pride	No common language; cultural differences
Economic growth	Economic corruption
New communications	Economic stagnation; isolation
Non-violent settlement of disputes	Ethnic violence
Greater political participation	Border violence

The outcome of these pressures is different for different regions, although the basic issues are the same—as portrayed in "Harambee." How does political development come about? How does the state relate to the outlying areas? What is a man's role in "modernizing" the state? How does a government curb ethnic violence and build cooperation?

FILM LINK

Political Development and Economic Hucksters

Political development basically means more participation by the people in government through elections, through patrons, through agencies, and in activities with parliament, party, and administration. It means an increased reliance on government authority, usually at the local level, and a decreased reliance on traditional political authorities such as chiefs, headmen, or village elders. As political development occurs, the political processes are increasingly institutionalized around local courts, political parties, and local administrators. The human brokers are the members of parliament, the party bosses or officials in the schools, police, army, administration or church missions.

The "State" today, however, is economically far more important than most people realize, simply because it is the largest employer and the prime spender. Because there is only a tiny public sector, any man who wishes to deal economically immediately and irrevocably comes into contact with the state. To be integrated, in African terms, means to be in the mosaic of a state-dominated economy and a state-controlled political ideology. The ideology, since the death of the two-party system throughout most of Africa, has been whatever the central government, often the President, said it was.

Economically every African state has had to make hard choices of what regions would receive high priority for development money and what regions would be de-emphasized and left largely on their own. Economic planning for a region has usually gone hand and glove with political development. As resources were poured into area "X," so too was more effort to make the area politically aware and sympathetic to national policies.

The shortage of development money and development "managers" has led to a priority system—putting resources into one area while banishing another to relative stagnation. This more capitalistic policy flowed, in Kenya's case, from the emphasis on export marketing and gained favor over a policy to spread wealth locally. The plan, articulated by the late Tom Mboya, was to "build up the whole pie" rather than disperse the pie in small pieces to every sector of the state. "Harambee," in short, is the national rallying cry, but it has been shouted in some areas more than in others.

Market at Marsabit.

Marsabit primary and secondary schools.

Kenya is about 80 per cent arid, semi-desert land, and intense development money has gone to areas of high fertility and high population. This was understandable in some cases, but it has relegated many regions to second-class status. At the same time, some lesser economic development does occur even in the remote corners. This development is often based on spin-offs from richer areas and includes such things as new trade routes and produce or more entrepreneurs looking for opportunities, a rise in tourists or simply an encroachment from other regions of the rising national population. In many ways the dry areas of Kenya are not unlike the last areas to be settled in the old West of the United States.

The regional problem is a crucial one. How does a central government keep in touch with the outlying regions. How do economic resources and political ideas flow back and forth? The problem has been talked about as one of the "center" versus the "periphery," a way of viewing the nation as a pie with the government in the center and the people on the edges. Others talk about "penetration" of the rural areas from the urban centers as a means of bringing about development.

In human terms, "agents of change" was the over-used phrase of the 1960s. Perhaps "hucksters" is more appropriate today, for under the "Harambee" slogan come all kinds of people and many different ideas. The cast of characters is varied:

Schoolteachers: Enormously influential modernizers, often bitter at their remote posting and often remotely posted for good reason.

Missionaries: Often the most dedicated, important, and occasionally misguided "modernizers" on the local scene.

Government Agents: A rotating cast of bureaucrats and authorities who run the gamut from local saviors to local incompetents.

Members of Parliament: Most vociferous and most able to call attention to local problems and gain government action.

Local Traditional Elite: Usually a fading group in terms of real power.

Road Builders: Men who leave behind the greatest single cause of rapid change, the new roads. Often lusty, brawling people who sow seeds of long-term social unrest.

Traders and Transporters: Enormous importance as modernizers, but with enormous greed, which is sometimes politically inspired and aided.

The cast of characters could go on to include more of those involved in negative changes: the poachers who wreak havoc with wildlife and change the balance of nature, the development planners who make disastrous economic mistakes, the cattle raiders practicing the oldest violent profession in north-eastern Africa who continue to spur tribal wars and ethnic disunity. It is probably enough that we emphasize only that "change" and "development" can have extremely negative as well as positive effects. Backlashes occur on well-meant projects and development experts can and often do create situations wherein the disease or destruction caused has been worse than the development. The fact that every outlying region has unique characteristics and unique solutions to its problems makes the job of the national leaders even more difficult.

MARSABIT DISTRICT
FOREST OFFICE

Government office in Marsabit.

FILM LINK

Nation versus Region: The North and the Boran

Viewed from the capital, each outlying region is unique. Some regions are favored for their agricultural strengths, their economic importance, their tourist value or because they are the home areas of many government workers in the capital. A certain stereotype is built up of outlying regions and passed on from one urban group to another. The north of Kenya has a poor reputation in Nairobi mainly because it is an isolated and poorly-understood area. Most national leaders are southern Kenyans with different racial characteristics and different life styles. Most hold the values of sedentary agriculturalists instead of pastoralists.

Usually northerners, particularly nomads, are vaguely embarrassing to the central government. They are vigorously independent, untaxable, uncooperative, and often reflect a "skins and beads" stereotype national leaders dislike. Northerners are thought to be troublesome, often violent people who may vanish across a border only to reappear months later, having paid no taxes and given little support to the state's policies. What is more annoying, northerners are often haughty, arrogant, and disparaging of those who have come from the south. Government officials are often victims of ethnic slurs by people who say things like, "Why have you come to our land from Kenya?" Getting northerners even to acknowledge they are citizens of a state called Kenya is sometimes difficult.

Part of the reason for the attitudes of noninvolvement displayed by the Boran is that they live in both northern Kenya and southern Ethiopia. They are a branch of the Galla-speaking peoples of the northeastern horn of Africa and until recently were mainly pastoral herdsmen who moved with their cows, camels, sheep, and goats over the vast arid lands of Kenya and Ethiopia. In recent years many Kenya Boran have succumbed to pressures to settle and now live in semipermanent villages near good grass and water. This change is in part due to the Somali-Kenya war of 1963-1969 when protected villages were necessary against armed raiders.

FILM LINK

The change to an agricultural life from that of nomadic herdsmen is seen most dramatically around Mt. Marsabit, the area chosen for the film location. Here small villages are scattered over the grassland slopes, their inhabitants cattle-keeping Boran who in part have joined the agricultural economy. Some Boran actually cultivate small plots while their sons tend cattle. Others hire cultivators to work for them or trade their livestock and milk for agricultural products. All are increasingly influenced by the presence of a growing market town, a new road, an expanding government post, and schooling facilities. Most Boran who farm still chant songs of the glorious nomadic life and how undignified it is to dig in the earth.

Mt. Marsabit rises from an arid scrub bush desert to 4,800 feet, covered on its lower slopes with grass and crowned with a thick rain forest. The mountain gives its name to the large surrounding administrative district and to the main district town which nestles on its northwestern slopes. Marsabit town, with a population of 6,000, is the administrative, trade, and education center for the entire area. In some senses the town is a temperate outpost on a vast desert, enjoying adequate rainfall and a mild climate in stark contrast to the heat and sand which surround it. Here the Kenya Boran, which overall number some 30,000, mingle with neighboring Rendille, Gabbra, and Samburu herdsmen plus an assortment of Somali, Burji, Turkana, and "down-country" Kenyans. In a sense, Marsabit town is a no-man's land, the center of a territorial pie with pieces radiating out to Boran land, to Gabbra land, and to Rendille land. If an uneasy peace exists in this trading town it is a matter of convenience and of government decree. The history of the area is one of tribal warfare, raiding, and violence.

Wako Diriba.

Reasons for Disunity: A History of Violence

Undoubtedly the greatest cause of disunity in northern Kenya is the long history of violence which continues into the present in the form of raiding, killing, and cattle theft. The age-old struggle in these dry savanna areas has been for control of grassland and water. The earliest Europeans in the area recorded constant intertribal warfare and indeed were themselves sometimes the object of attack. In a film interview, 76-year-old Wako Diriba, headman of a Boran village, relates one such encounter that must have occurred about 1908:

> People here used to live on their own. Then the white government came and occupied this land. The government officials had camels; they had everything and Boran were amazed at these strangers...
>
> The first officials had a Somali man with them who knew the Boran language. We mounted our horses and started to chase them, trying to kill their camels with spears.

> Then the official said, "Don't attack... Don't try to provoke us." We said, "Don't listen to his words" and we attacked them on our horses.
>
> The two big flashes he lit gave a booming sound. We were frightened and turned toward home. In the retreat we asked each other, "What was this? This is not something we should get near."
>
> Those were the first white men to come to our land. I was very young then.
>
> Before then we governed by our own rules, but we are two-sided now. One part belongs to the government and the other part to our own traditions.

From the beginning of the British dominance of the "Northern Frontier" of Kenya, in about 1912 until the Union Jack was struck in 1963, and continuing into the independence period until today, there has been a constant series of raids, incursions, and border violations by the Ethiopians or Somalis. Early attacks from the north were often supported by the Ethiopian government against the Boran in northern Kenya. A 1913 dispatch tells of the Ethiopian government's persecution of the Boran. A man called Lugga Yaiua gave British officers the following report:*

> I have run away from Abyssinia with some of my people as my tribesmen of the Boran have been divided up amongst Abyssinian soldiers. We and our wives and children became slaves, digging gardens for the soldiers we were handed over to, cutting their fuel, drawing their water, building their houses, and our donkeys and camels carrying their loads. We also have had to supply our masters with meat and milk for themselves and their friends. Our cattle and sheep and camels we must not dispose of without our masters' permission. In addition we have to pay taxes to the Abyssinian Government.
>
> This year the Abyssinians have imposed a new tax on us. They counted our stock and now tell us we must pay a sum of dollars for every 100 head they have counted. Since our stock have been counted, rinderpest has wiped out large quantities of our animals but the tax is calculated on the count they made earlier.**

To keep the picture balanced it is important to underscore that these are British colonial officers reporting with all their anti-Somali and anti-Ethiopian biases. Equally strong feelings against the British and Kenyan elements were common in Ethiopia and Somalia.***

After 1936, when the Italians invaded Ethiopia, the Italians were believed to be giving the more lawless elements in the southern part of Ethiopia guns and supplies in order to carry out raids into Kenya. During World War II the Italians also reportedly supported Somali raiders. These were essentially episodic fights with patrols of the British-led Kings African Rifles. A report dated June 3, 1943, from the District Commissioner of nearby Garissa, recounts one of these raids, saying that several of the enemy had been killed, although his 17 police were badly out-gunned and undermanned. He concludes:

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*Another government report dated 20 August 1919, indicates the nature of the warfare between the Boran and other groups living around the Kenya-Ethiopian border.

> Yesterday in revenge for the defeat they had received, the Tigre mutilated one of the seven men by cutting off one of his ears and flaying his face. They sent him back to his village to say that if the ransom for the other six was not forthcoming at once all the rest would be treated the same way.

Source: Officer in Charge, Northern Frontier District, National Archives of Kenya.

**Source: District Commissioner of Moyale, March 1913, National Archives of Kenya.

***See discussion of Boran traditional warfare and contemporary warfare in A. Legesse, 1973, 73-81.

> What we need for these blighters is a specially-trained platoon with tommy guns. Fights, while they last, are brief and one wants to get off as much lead in as short a time as possible.*

Even today raiding continues and not a season passes without inter-tribal clashes and deaths. The Boran place great value on all the military virtues and men are compared constantly to bulls and lions. To kill an enemy, a lion, or an elephant was once the aim of every young man and an essential prerequisite to a respectable marriage and recognition as a social adult. Indeed, there is an entire Boran lore about honor, courage in the face of the enemy, protection of livestock, and revenge. To kill an enemy, no matter how old, and to steal his cattle is not only a quick solution to one's own cattle losses, but a daring and honorable thing to do.

One such case we knew about during the film-making involved the theft of 26 cattle and the killing of a herdsboy. He had been attacked and speared repeatedly. On this occasion police tracked the raiders through the bush and captured them by surprise. One man admitted the killing; the others said they had merely "dipped their spears" for the honor of it. All were grown men. The boy was eleven years old.

In very recent years open warfare between Kenyans and Somalis over control of Kenya's northern territory has added to the aura of violence. This so-called *shifta* (bandit) war from 1963-1969 put the whole population on a war footing and memories of ambushes, land-mines, machine-gun attacks and wanton killing are still fresh. In addition, the political sympathies of northerners, as a pre-independence British Commission on the border problem learned, are not 100 per cent in support of the Kenya government. The border with Ethiopia and Somalia in essence allows people to move back and forth as their political whims dictate. This, coupled with the history of violence and distrust of one's neighbors, makes the political integration of the northern peoples into Kenya a slow process indeed.

Disunity: The Border Phenomenon

When a British television crew arrived among the Mursi people of southern Ethiopia, the Mursi said they had never heard of Ethiopia. They had their own state: Mursiland. This attitude is not uncommon throughout the horn region. The Boran claim to live in Boranland. The fact that Boranland is split by what far-away governments call the Kenya-Ethiopia border is of little significance. For example, Wako Diriba, the village elder quoted earlier, was filmed talking about conditions in Boranland before the "Kenyans" came to govern, that is, before the southern Kenyans came into Boranland after independence.

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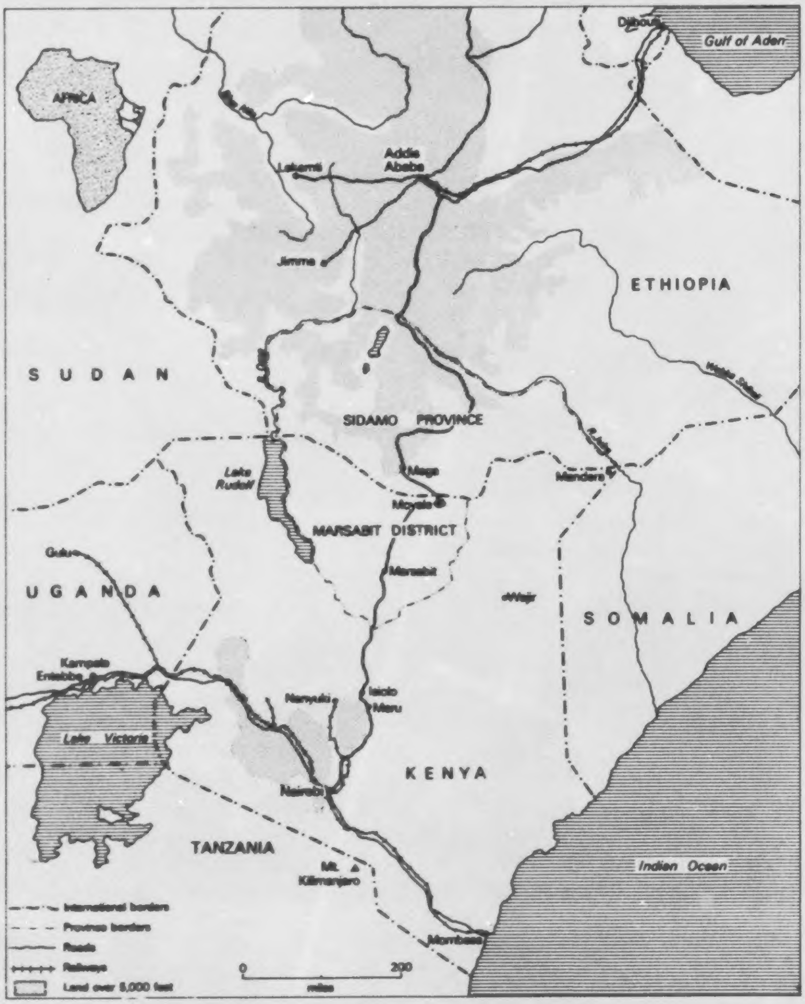
*Source: National Archives of Kenya.

This slowness to see oneself as a citizen of any state is a part of what we might call the "border phenomenon." A man can use a border to great advantage, moving back and forth to avoid such things as taxes or license fees, and taking advantage of such things as lower prices or better grass and water. The man who can move on to avoid trouble, as Boran pastoralists do, is in a position of political flux and isolation. The state has a hard time convincing him he is a citizen of anywhere.

Officials near borders like the Kenya-Ethiopia sector of Boranland are in a constant state of agitation. Health technicians despair


AFRICA
Djibouti
Gulf of Aden
Addis Ababa
Lekemti
Jimma
ETHIOPIA
SUDAN
SIDAMO PROVINCE
Lake Rudolf
Mega
Moyale
Mandera
MARSABIT DISTRICT
Marsabit
Gulu
UGANDA
Wajir
SOMALIA
Kampala
Entebbe
Lake Victoria
Nanyuki
Isiolo
Meru
KENYA
Nairobi
TANZANIA
Mt. Kilimanjaro
Indian Ocean
Mombasa
International borders
Province borders
Roads
Railways
Land over 5,000 feet
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200
miles

openly about smallpox and cholera controls. Cattle officials worry about the wanton spread of disease. Missionaries concerned with famine relief in drought periods are even more cynical because it is impossible to stop people from selling food, often their own relief food, on whatever side of the border is paying the highest price. Customs agents generally throw up their hands in despair. The area is a smuggler's paradise. Foodstuffs, leopard skins, and ivory flow both ways, depending on what national outlets are working. Consumer goods like pens, shirts, umbrellas, and raincoats flow north. Ethiopian shoes, fine cloth, and spices move south. Smuggling is the local border sport, played by most in a small way, although while the film crew was in the area, 27,000 black and white colobus monkey skins were captured in one truck as they were being smuggled out of Ethiopia.

At the same time that the border serves as a political escape mechanism, it creates other problems. Government towns at the border, mainly Moyale and Garissa, attract many ethnic groups who wish to trade or use the hospitals. Cattle movements are often in a state of flux and tensions around waterholes can be so extreme that government police are unable to control the inevitable skirmishes. Missionaries who set up stations where these Boran and other tribes converge find they are creating shantytown settlement camps in famine years, particularly if they have put in wells or water tanks. A missionary who may be under Kenya government authority suddenly finds hundreds of Boran from Ethiopia have shown up to use his facilities or seek support from the mission. Coordinated relief or administration efforts across borders, other than those the Boran can work out themselves, simply do not exist.

Disunity: The Traditional Codes

A further reason why Boran have not integrated more into the nations is that their traditional political system remains partially intact. Boran have religious leaders in Ethiopia and different grades of religious men, but they have no chiefs and no hierarchical authority. Every family elder heads his own political unit and families are free to move as they wish. Often families settle near a man with a large herd, calling him the "Father of the village," but these alliances are not binding and not permanent.*

FILM
LINK

Boran were bound together in age grades originally for warlike purposes. The *hariya* ceremony at the end of the film is such a "coming out" of an age grade. Boys at about eighteen pass through *hariya* to mark their entry into manhood. In the two-day ceremony pledges of loyalty to age-mates are made and oaths to "fight" bravely, stand together, protect each other and attack the enemy are taken. Cleansing the body of evil is done and a great deal of chanting and singing of warrior songs occur. The ceremony binds a certain group together and publicly serves to announce that they have entered manhood. Aside from the group

*See Kenya Boran I for fuller discussion on Boran social codes.

unity the ceremony achieves, young men are now free to cavort sexually and it is a time of great boasting and plotting about forthcoming seductions.

The traditional political system was held together by customary laws which could be administered by three or four elders and family heads. Practically all crimes were punishable by thrashing or fining, but in the case of serious moral crimes, offenders were banished and pronounced symbolically dead.

The traditional scale of punishment for more serious crimes:

Adultery (not considered serious)	1 heifer
Causing death	30 cattle
Fornication with an unmarried girl	30 cattle
Disobeying elders	5 cattle
Wounding	1 bull
Refusing to attend a funeral	1 bull
Striking a woman (only a man's offense)	1 heifer
Youth disobeying a parent	1 thrashing

The Boran's attitude of superiority is a key illustration of belief that reinforces feelings of tribal unity while inhibiting the development of national consciousness. For example, Boran believe the primary reason for Somali expansion (at Boran expense) has been that the Somali spoiled their own water and grazing through bad management and had therefore no alternative but to fight, cheat, and use intrigue to get Boran wells. They also see it as a mark of Somali inferiority that they fight among themselves. A Boran proverb expresses their view succinctly, with a reference to the *gutu*, the forelock of hair worn by a young man which sticks straight out like a penis. Translated, it states:

The Boran are *gutu*; the Somali are farts.

On balance, this is an ethnocentric view. The Somali have their own equally colorful views of the Boran and just as many degrading beliefs about Boran warlike abilities.

Political unity and fine leadership at the tribal level were always valued by Boran. A boran fable comparing the bustard, a rather silly, unattractive bird, to the handsome guinea fowl is illustrative:

> Once upon a time, many years ago, God called the elders of the lesser bustard tribe and guinea fowl tribe and said to them:
>
> "I have decided that I am going to either destroy the whole of your tribes and leave you just your king and queen, or to destroy your kings and queens only. You each have the choice."

Boran Chief Jilo Turkena.

The elders thought this over carefully and finally the guinea fowl decided it would be better to let their king and queen survive so the race might be rebuilt from royal stock, lest they should lack future leadership. They informed God accordingly.

But the lesser bustards said to themselves, "If only our king and queen survive, then we, the elders of the tribe, shall die!" They were afraid of death and therefore told God to kill their king and queen.

God, having heard the wishes of the respective elders, declared that those who had been chosen to die would do so on the fifteenth day of the moon. And so it was.

As time went on the guinea fowl tribe multiplied from the royal stock until today all are as proud as the king himself and all move in large flocks under their leaders. But the lesser bustards, deprived of their leaders, lacked unity and broke away in ones and twos so that today they are always seen alone, timid and without leaders. They have always regretted the decision of their long-dead elders to kill their king, and, if you listen carefully on the night of every full moon, you will hear them calling.

"Oh leaders, come to us, come to us, come to us!"

Elements of Change

The "harambee" spirit is one of change and improvement. It is a slogan designed to rally people to use their muscles, to expend energy, to work for themselves. Born of the independence fervor, "harambee" is basically a call for everyone to help build the nation. When the dust settles from Harambee Day festivities, when the flags and bunting are taken down and the benches carried back to the school, what has really happened? What changes are really under way?

FILM
LINK

In Boran areas one is tempted to say very few. Most Boran elders are as remote and scornful of government as ever. Schools seem to make little progress in stimulating new ideas and the physical improvements to the landscape seem insignificant. These judgments, however, may be too harsh. Each of the main elements of change seen in the film—are developments of some kind.

FILM
LINK

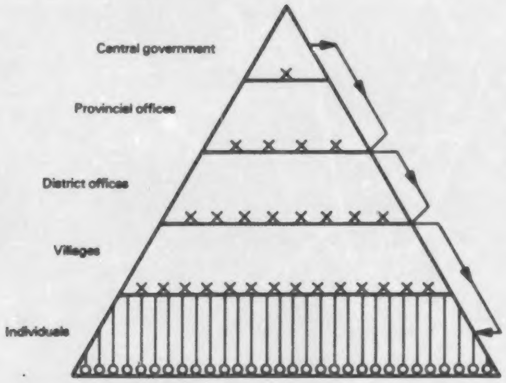
Chiefs and Local Government

Chiefs' meetings, usually held under a shade tree, are the main contact village leaders have with government. Chiefs are the lowest rung on the government ladder and each is appointed. Many Boran see the chiefs as totally illegitimate because there is no indigenous Boran system of chieftaincy and no particular desire to get any closer to government than necessary. Taxes, fees, destocking suggestions, enforced schooling, and other demands all flow from the government. On the other hand, Boran value government services such as cattle inoculations, water improvements and medical facilities. Chiefs are usually appointed by the District Commissioner from candidates who have some local respect. The salary paid to each is about $30 a month, but this is seen by them more as an entertainment allowance. To accomplish anything, chiefs must spend money for "entertainment."

District Commissioner.

Assistant chiefs are usually the ones who collect taxes and fees and who complain the loudest about "backsliders pulling down the flag of Kenya," or the lack of "harambee spirit." The system of assistants serving as "hatchet" men allows the chief to be more diplomatic and aloof, a political practice common the world over. In fact, Boran chiefs have little power over people and mainly serve to cajole and to interpret the local government's wishes. The real basis of power lies with the district administration.

The district, in this case Marsabit, is headed by a District Commissioner, a once all-powerful colonial designate. Since independence in Kenya, the D.C. has been stripped of much of his power, both by the strengthening of local courts and councils and by giving more authority to the local representatives of each working ministry of the central government. A simplified link between citizens and government, showing local officers and one type of ministry representative, the agricultural officers, is as follows:



The local government is undoubtedly the most important modernizing force in the district. There is a functioning hospital; the education officer operates 30 schools, and agricultural, veterinary and range officers have projects under way. The local government is the main employer; it maintains law and order and initiates new projects, which may range from redigging wells to a new tourist lodge to improved livestock-marketing procedures.

We know how government officials view the Boran. But what are typical Boran feelings about the officials? One indicator is the songs at weddings and festive occasions. Like political jokes and political cartoons, they indicate the temper of the times. In a film sound recording, "leaders" are good-naturedly referred to as "enemies," with singing, drumming, clapping rhythms.

The old men of the Council are enemies.
The old men of the town are enemies.
Above them all, Chief Jillo is an enemy.
They made all the grassland into farms.
Herding cattle became difficult.
The big people are enemies.
The leaders of the people are enemies.
These old men's meetings are for drinking beer.

Good-natured or not, the political point for any leader is clear enough: push too hard for rapid changes and you may unleash the ridicule of the people. This is a part of the Boran larger political idiom in which ridicule can be used to control any leader.

Education

The schools, as elements of change, create totally new types of citizens. As the story of Peter Boru, in the Kenya Boran film portrays, it is hard for a newly educated boy to go home to herding again, particularly after seven years in a boarding school. Village life is then too alien, one's new expectations too different. Of course education as the yellow brick road to success often turns out to be an illusion. Many students are not able to find work and their only options are to wander in the towns or, in fact, to "go home again."

When festivities like Harambee Day occur they undoubtedly have some impact both on the students and on the school as an institution. Donations for the schools are collected, chickens auctioned off for fund-raising and schoolboys participate in songs, dances, and games. It's all very festive and may even be instructive if the D.C. makes a good speech or if the political party boss is particularly eloquent in his call for unity and self-help.

FILM LINK

Schools of course trigger other changes. The expectations of the green-sweatered high school students are revealing. In response to "What is the purpose of education," the film captures many views:

1st student: "To make us connected to others; to learn to cooperate; to learn community rules and duties."
2nd student: "To earn my living... I will help others with my pay."
3rd student: "To help our parents and others in the community."

Argument: "You should help yourself first."
1st answer: "What about helping others?"
2nd answer: "How can you help others when you have not helped yourself?"
3rd answer: "Join the university, then help my country and the world."
4th answer: "Go back to the manyatta (village) to get married."
5th answer: "You are a wastage!"
6th answer: "No, I will apply my knowledge to farming systems and preach about the goodness of an education."
7th answer: "But there might be opposition to you."
Conclusion: "Where there is no opposition there is no progress."

The Road

The single most important factor bringing economic and political change is the new road linking Nairobi and Addis Ababa. It is a major achievement, spanning some of the most difficult dry lands and lava rock deserts in the world. So tortuous was the trip to Marsabit from the south that before World War II only camels made the trek. By 1942 a track had opened for military vehicles, but this was so bad that no regular transport existed. It was not until 1967, when, as Peter Boru says, it was the first time people there saw a motorcycle or the Kenya Bus. Under these conditions it was easy to see how the north could remain isolated and shrouded in mystery.

When the new all-weather road was planned it was for several reasons: to link Ethiopia for trade; to "secure" the north-central area of Kenya in case of more Somali attacks; to provide a stimulus to local trade, particularly in livestock, hides, and meat; and to integrate the northern peoples into the nation. Peter Boru's

Film Dialogue

You see, the country is changing now.
The road is going ahead.
They are bringing bad things . . .
Like harlots.

Moving to Bubissa,
I saw an overturned lorry.
One man was dead.
An accident doesn't matter.
The road is O.K. . . .

Everyone in the world is dying.
And when you die,
What are you going to do?
Can you say to the God,
"I want to wake me up from death?"

Now I am young.
I'll be old and bent
And walk with a stick
Must die – Peter–
I must die . . . one day.

Peter Boru

Road building through Boran pasturelands.

soliloquy, seen written at the beginning of the film and later spoken by Peter, is the reaction of a young man to the road as a "thing" plus his rather interesting philosophy about road accidents and death.

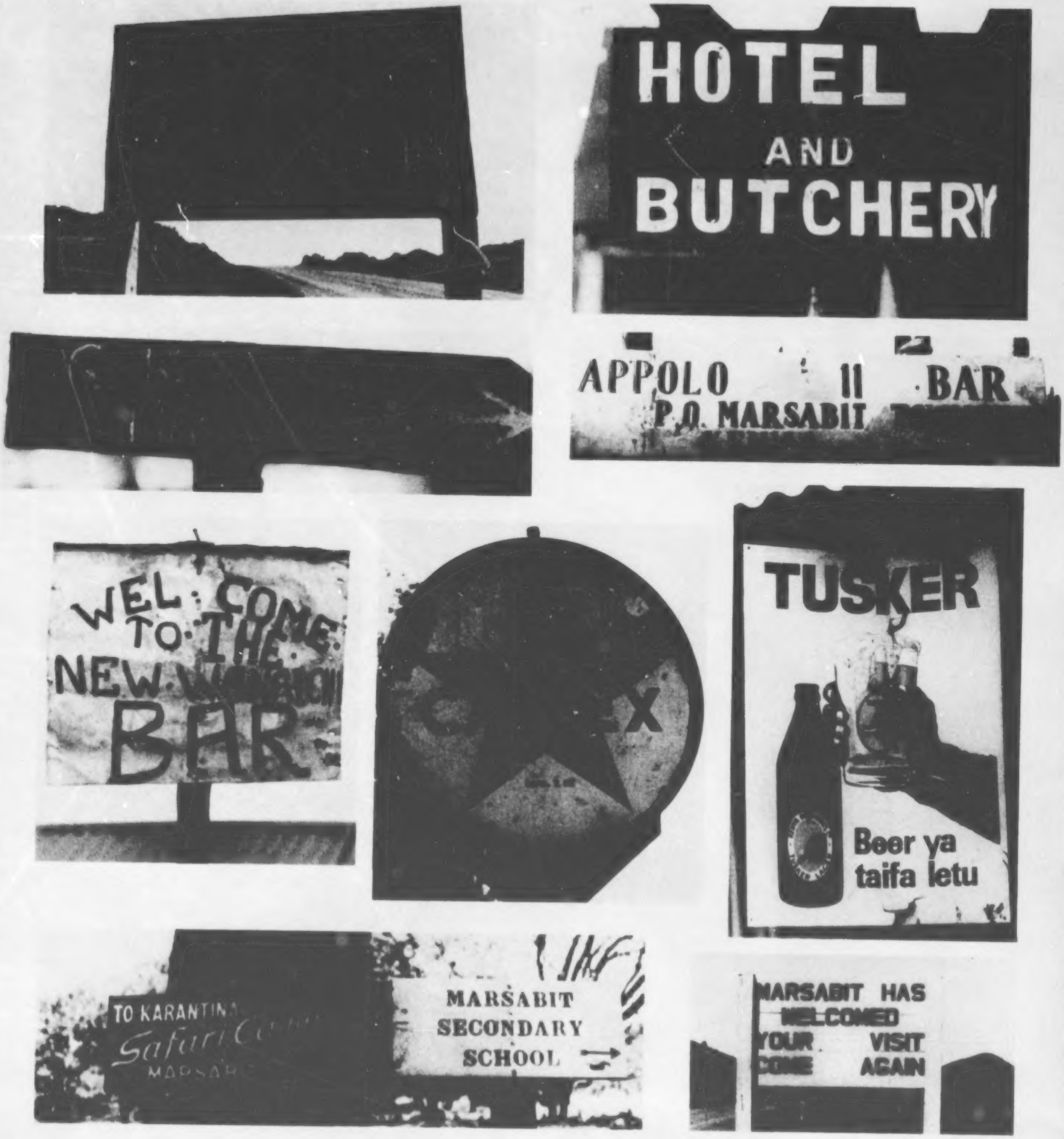
The fact that the road brought death, increasingly so as accident after accident occurred when the road surface deteriorated, is cited as a "bad thing" by Peter. In fact, the road is an example of how "development" can be "destructive." Changes brought by the road include both positive and negative effects, for example:

(+)	(-)
Open up modest trade	Increase in civil disorder, drinking, prostitution
Linking two nations for long-term trade	Increase in road accidents and fatalities
Permitted M.P.s and politicians to get from home areas to the capital quickly	Increased breakdown of government vehicles; high maintenance costs of vehicles
Brings easier medical services and famine relief when needed	Road difficult and costly to maintain
Increases military security	Road used by poachers, smugglers, bandits for fast truck movement at night

The Forces of Change

Like the schools and the government development programs, the new roads will ultimately foster political and economic integration. Profound change will come about as Boran begin to compete with other groups for jobs and economic position in the national marketplace. Already Boran schoolboys trying to enter the money economy are a factor to be dealt with by the government. The Kenya government needs the Boran to preserve stability and its territorial rights in the northern districts, and such stability is by necessity linked to some degree of progress.

What is perceived as progress by the national government often generates fear and uncertainty for many Boran. Government protection for them through police patrols is a mixed blessing, because it also allows encroachment from other tribes under the enforced peace. The major fears are of loss of grazing areas, loss of access to water and, for some, ritual impurity in mixing with other groups.

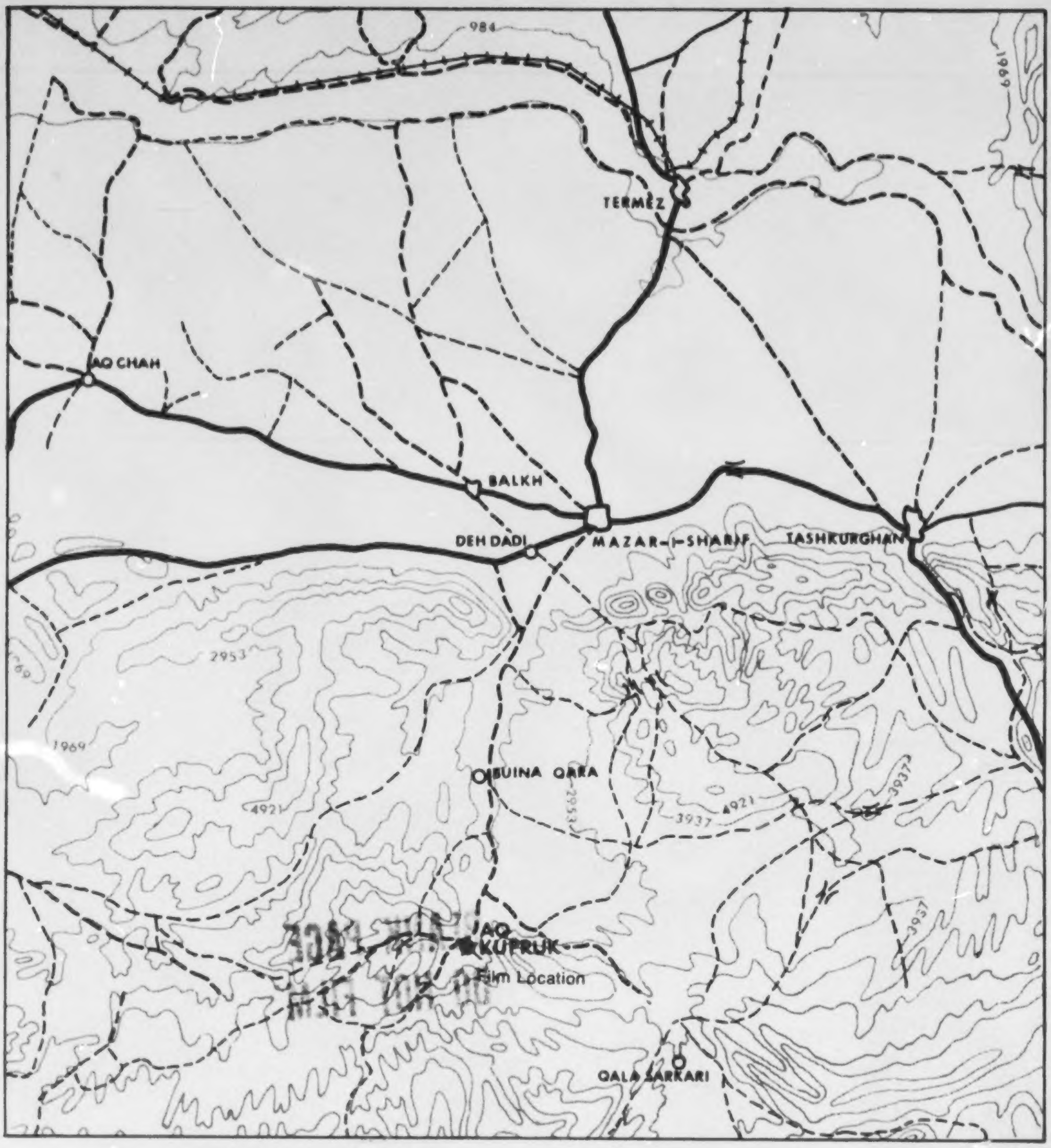

HOTEL
AND
BUTCHERY
APPOLO 11 BAR
P.O. MARSABIT
WEL COME TO THE NEW
BAR
TUSKER
Beer ya taifa letu
TO KARANTINA
MARSABIT SECONDARY SCHOOL
MARSABIT HAS WELCOMED YOUR VISIT COME AGAIN

Signs of Change.

As small as Marsabit town is, this urban influence is increasingly dramatic. Some of the local tensions center on the changes from the old life of freedom and insecurity to a new, more settled life with far less freedom but greater economic security. How do people change? In the short run, one sees the overuse of the mountain water and forests, the depletion of the grass, the need for more money and the growing realization of poverty. There is the rapid growth of small farms, the growing generation gap, the increase in hooligans and lounge-abouts in the town, the rise of petty begging and the demise of the old arrogance and dignity. People's ideas of rhythm and time also change; the cycles of Boran movement now include the town more often; the road is used far more; there is a greater reliance on clocks and time used by officials and traders: the time the shops open, the day the butcher slaughters, the hours of inoculations, the time the bus leaves, the hour of the chief's meeting.

Perhaps the most far-reaching stimulant to change is the government's wish to open new settlement schemes and to turn Boran pastoralists into sedentary farmer-cattle keepers. There is, however, no consensus within the government as to exactly how such schemes should be carried out. The basic conflict is between those who feel the Boran should be settled and controlled, and those who feel their traditional, far-ranging grazing patterns could be organized on some cooperative ranching basis.

One teacher flatly stated that to force the Boran to settle is to condemn them to extinction. His argument was that this ecological zone, the semi-deserts running across Africa just south of the Sahara, have always been among the most violent parts of Africa. Settlement is not typical; a person needs at least two hundred square miles in which to graze cattle and feed a family. To force people into tight settlements is to destroy their entire life style, and at the same time to destroy their genius in using the dry lands. Administrators, on the other hand, take the view that the old way of life, where people roamed free and "might made right" is the essence of chaos.


984
1969
TERMEZ
AQ CHAH
BALKH
DEH DADI
MAZAR-I-SHARIF
TASHKURGHAN
2953
1969
SUINA QARA
2953
4921
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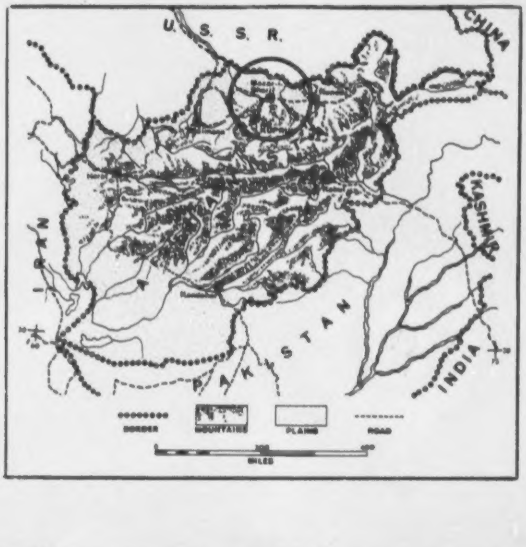
3937
3937
3937
AQ KUPRUK
Film Location
QALA SARKARI


U. S. S. R.
CHINA
KASHMIR
IRAN
PAKISTAN
INDIA
BORDER
MOUNTAINS
PLAINS
ROAD
MILES

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AFGHANISTAN

1

Rural Society

AFGHAN VILLAGE

AN ETHNIC GRAY ZONE

by LOUIS DUPREE

Aq Kupruk is a village-town of the neolithic yesterday and the transistorized today. It is like a long time tunnel, encompassing thousands of years. It combines a sense of unending time with limited space and the symbiosis of incipient town life, agricultural cycles, and nomadic existence. The record of the emergence of proto-urban culture at Aq Kupruk can be read in the village and its valley: animal and plant domestication, grain growing, surplus accumulations, specialization in the bazaar, and the contemporary efforts at national integration of the local entity. If stones are the stuff of history, a town like Aq Kupruk is one of the foundation stones of continuing human development.

The Geographical Setting

The valley of Aq Kupruk sits south of the Turkestan plains in the northern foothills of Afghanistan at an altitude of about 750 meters above sea level.The foothills are north of the Hindu Kush watershed, a broad zone of mountainous plateau stretching from about 70° East to the Iranian-Afghan border. A series of north-south valleys formed by various rivers flowing out of the Hindu Kush dominates the topography. Passes separate the various valleys, whose broader floodplains support the bulk of the local population.

Low, bare, limestone, shale, and sandstone mountains with rounded summits surround most populated valleys. Soils in the upper reaches are usually thin and stony. In the lower foothills, however, including Aq Kupruk, rich loess deposits, blown for millennia off the Central Asian steppes, blanket the region. Seasonally, these hills are covered with flowering, grassy meadows over which the flocks of both sedentary and seminomadic peoples graze. In addition, farmers grow unirrigated crops, including wheat, barley, and melons, on the hillsides, leaving fields fallow periodically to renew their fertility.

Rich deposits of silts, clays, and redeposited loess can be found where the river valleys broaden, especially as one approaches the Turkestan plains, and intensive, irrigated farming takes place. Most of the people in the region still depend on upland wheat for subsistence, however, and droughts can cause local havoc in zones of relative inaccessibility.

Generally speaking, Aq Kupruk's climate is characterized by warm, dry summers and cold winters with heavy snowfall, especially in the higher mountains. Maximum rainfall occurs in February, March, and April, and melting snows swell the rivers and streams during the spring. Sometimes lorries cannot reach the town of Aq Kupruk for days at a time.

Attributes of the Peasant-Tribal Society

1. *Nonliteracy and ethnolinguistic diversity*. In Afghanistan, over 90 percent of the population is illiterate. Linguistic diversity remains a divisive factor and in the Aq Kupruk area alone, two major language families are represented.

2. *Ecological time-energy relationship*. Most of the people of Aq Kupruk spend the major part of their time engaged in basic food production, either agriculture, herding, or, more commonly, a combination of the two.

3. *Limited mobility*. Peasant-tribal societies limit social, economic, political, and geographic mobility, usually to help insure group survival at the expense of individual choice.

4. *No adolescence for children*. The individual lives in a group-oriented, uni-institutional, rural society: the extended family and other kin units. Child socialization takes place *inside* the family. The child becomes an adult almost overnight, with a full range of social, economic, and political responsibilities. About the time children in developed societies are *preparing* for their roles, the Aq Kupruk child begins to *live* his. There is no time of learning away from the family; the family *is* the way of life.

5. *Kinship replaces government*. Few governments in the Third World can replace the delicate network of reciprocal, social, economic, and political rights and obligations which function in the various kin-units at the regional and tribal level. Rights and obligations are tightly defined and include everything from the right to name a child to social

The village of Aq Kupruk.

welfare and warfare. Contacts with outside—taxes, military conscription, forced labor, women for the harems of the powerful and wealthy—are usually viewed negatively.

"People have lived in Aq Kupruk since time began." According to an old Tajik folkteller, it literally began with Eden. Regional pride leads the people to believe that Allah would not have neglected Aq Kupruk in the original act of creation. In fact, man did come to Aq Kupruk at least 20,000 years ago—and probably earlier. A series of defaced Buddhist paintings on the roof of a prehistoric rock shelter reminds us that Aq Kupruk was on one of the main routes to India leading off the major Silk Route from Cathay to the Classical Mediterranean World. Politically, the period was Kushan; culturally, Buddhist. The precise date when Islam came to the valley of Aq Kupruk is unknown, but probably it was during the cultural revival introduced by the Samanids (819-1005 A.D.) from their capital in Bokhara.

People and Culture

Two basic ethnolinguistic groups reside in the town of Aq Kupruk, Tajik and Uzbak. Little differentiates the cultural patterns of the two save mother tongue. The Tajik speak Tajiki, a Persian (called Farsi in Iran; Dari in Afghanistan) dialect of the Indo-European language family; Indo-Iranian sub-family. The Uzbak speak Uzbaki, a Kipchak (Turkic) dialect of the Uralic-Altaic language family. Although Dari is the lingua franca for much of Afghanistan, a hybrid Tajiki-Uzbaki subdialect appears to be emerging in the Aq Kupruk area.

Generations of miscegenation cause both Tajik and Uzbak to exhibit Mongoloid physical features. The Tajik, however, are basically Caucasoid. There is disagreement as to which group arrived first in Aq Kupruk but consensus gives the Tajik priority. Among the Tajik, two groups consider themselves to be descended from the Arabs who first arrived in Central Asia in the seventh century A.D. The Term "Tajik" is probably from an Old Persian word for Arab, *Taj* or *Taz.** In time, the term came to refer to all Muslims in Central Asia, and finally to distinguish Persian speakers from Turkic speakers.

The Saadat (plural for Sayyid) consider themselves to be descendants of the Prophet Mohammad, through his daughter, Fatima, and his cousin and son-in-law, Ali. The Khoja (or Khwaja), according to local tradition, are descendants of Abu Bakr, First Caliph in Mecca from 632-634 A.D. after the death of the Prophet Mohammad. Possibly some of the Saadat in Aq Kupruk are truly Sayyid, but none speaks Arabic and all look at least moderately Mongoloid. They are probably Tajik whose forefathers married into Saadat groups and adopted the individual title "Sayyid" to enhance their prestige. When asked to which tribe or ethnic group (*qaum*) they belong, most reply "Tajik." Only the more affluent consistently use the honorific "Sayyid." More important, however, the people of Aq Kupruk and the majority of the Saadat (there are some doubters among the recently literate) *believe* the Saadat to be the true Descendants of the Prophet, and often ask the wealthiest, politically powerful Saadat to mediate disputes; most of the affluent people in Aq Kupruk are Saadat.

The Khoja in Aq Kupruk present an even more complex problem. Like the Saadat, the Khoja are found in most of the Muslim world. Most Khoja outside Afghanistan are the followers of the Ismailiya Shia leader, Agha Khan IV, but all the Aq Kupruk Khoja profess to be Hanafi Sunni, the school of Islamic law which predominates in Aq Kupruk. In 1962, however, one family of Khoja did claim to be Ismailiya. Therefore, either the Khoja of Aq Kupruk are Tajik passing as the descendants of the Arab Caliph Abu Bakr, or Ismailiya Shia practicing *taqiya*, a most practical custom by which Shia claim to be Sunni in order to protect lives and property or, as in Kabul, retain government jobs in a Sunni-dominant society. Overall, the Tajik are superior numerically and also dominate the power structure.

The Tajik and Uzbak in Aq Kupruk refer to all Pushtun as Afghan, in spite of campaigns by present and past governments to convince all ethnolinguistic groups to consider themselves Afghans first. All non-Pushtun groups refer to themselves by their own designations (Tajik, Uzbak, Hazara, Turkoman, Baluch, etc.)—but they always call the Pushtun "Afghan." Tajik, however, often refer to themselves after their valleys of origin [Panjsheri, Andarabi, etc.]; the Hazara, by old tribal names, such as Jigatu, Jaghori, Dai Zangi, etc.).**

Chart 1
Households in Aq Kupruk: 1959-1972*

Tajik	100	80	86
Saadat	100	90	93
Khoja	50	40	30
Uzbak	50	40	33
Pushtun	1	1	--
	301	251	242

*The average number of persons per household is about seven. Unless prompted, the people never give population figures in numbers, but rather the number of households *(khanah)*. When asked about individuals, they respond with the number of males past puberty. Only reluctantly will they even mention the female population. Also, the Uzbak minority had a tendency to overestimate its actual size at least two times.

**Tazi* in modern Afghanistan refers to the Afghan hound, which the Afghans do not consider dogs. Muslims, in general, consider dogs unclean, and mistreat them, but not the *tazi*.

**A single family of Safi Pushtun lived in Aq Kupruk for 20 years. They had been moved forcibly from the Kunar River area (near Jalalabad in east Afghanistan) to Aq Kupruk in 1949 after an unsuccessful revolt against the government. The two Safi adult males had married Tajik women, and in Aq Kupruk usually referred to themselves as Tajik, but always as Pushtun or Afghan outside the valley. The Pushtun household left Aq Kupruk in 1969, and, along with several Khoja and Uzbak households, moved to Sholgara.

Chart 2

Tajik Subgroup Households in Aq Kupruk: 1972

	Tajik Proper	Saadat	Khoja
Hajji Mohammad	--	55*	--
Mansur	35	8	10
Mashhadi	26	19	10
Shahniaz	25	20	10
	86	102	30

*The Hajji Mohammad group may have the only reasonable claim to call themselves Saadat.

Four Tajik subgroups exist in Aq Kupruk, and three of the groups contain Tajik proper, Saadat, and Khoja (Chart 2). All four names represent four brothers, who were the founders of the units named after them. But no one in Aq Kupruk can trace his ancestry beyond his great-grandfather, and some are even hazy about that. The ethnic miscegenation at Aq Kupruk (and elsewhere in north Afghanistan) has broken down the importance of maintaining lineage memories beyond three generations, although Tajik and Uzbak still view in-group marriage as the ideal. None, they maintain, would marry a Moghol or Hazara.

In mountains to the south, east and west live Hazara groups, mainly the Dai Zangi, but with Yek Aulang to the east. are Mongoloid-looking, Dari speakers of the Hazaragi dialect. All are Muslims: some in the east are Ismailiya Shia but most are Imani Shia. They are not, as popularly believed (probably in order to justify discrimination against them by other Afghan groups), the descendants of the armies of Genghis Khan, but probably arrived subsequently during the Turco-Mongol periods of the Il-Khanids and the Timurids (thirteenth to fifteenth centuries A.D.).

Small groups of Moghol live to the south of Aq Kupruk. Mongolian, like Turkic, is of the Uralic-Altaic language family. Although most Moghol today speak Dari dialects, their vocabulary contains a number of Mongol words and some of the older generation still know Mongolian. They may actually be descendants of the Mongols of Genghis Khan.

A small village of Pashai live near the Moghol; they were shipped north about 90 years ago from the fringes of Nuristan after they revolted against Abdur Rahman Khan. The Pashai speak a Dardic dialect of the Indo-European language family.

Other groups, calling themselves "Arab" Saadat, speaking an Arabicized-Persian, move through the mountains seasonally. Few, however, pass through Aq Kupruk. The peoples of the region consider them to be ethnically Tajik.

The Rural Household

FILM LINK

The household dwelling compounds (*khanah*) in Aq Kupruk reflect a mixture of Iranian Plateau and Central Asian influences. The basic house type in high, dry Afghanistan is square or rectangular, constructed of sun-dried bricks or pisé (mud walls pressed in wooden frames or more frequently simply piled higher and higher), covered with mud and straw plaster. The bricks are made in wooden molds, then placed on the ground to dry. Flat roofs of rammed earth (which must be remudded each fall) rest on mat-covered, wooden beams. A layer of interlaced twigs and branches between the beams and the rammed earth prevent mice and rats from infesting the ceiling. Stone foundations occur where stones are available.

The basic Uzbak rectangular house type with several rooms leading off a veranda-like porch is common wherever Uzbak-Tajik mixtures exist in northern Afghanistan. Some families in Aq Kupruk (particularly Tajik) live in square huts with domed roofs, a variant of a type found across Iran into northern Iraq, Syria, and central Anatolia. Additional beehive segments can be added as new nuclear families come into being. The more well-to-do in Aq Kupruk have special guest rooms where they entertain, and in which guests can spend the night. Mud wall screens usually separate the guest room from the family courtyard.

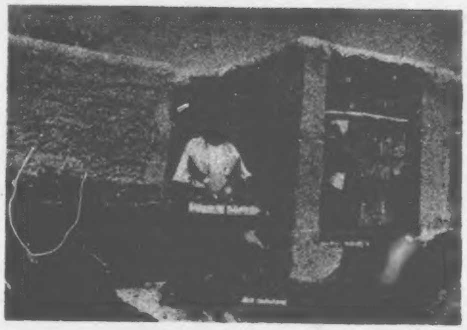
Pressed mud walls of varying heights line the meandering lanes of Aq Kupruk and enclose the dwelling compounds to ensure privacy. The ground inside the compounds is watered down at least twice daily during the hot summer days. This minimizes the dust and hardens the ground as it dries. The people also place brush from the mountains over open windows during the summer, sprinkling it with water. The resulting shade inside and the process of evaporation help keep the room cool.

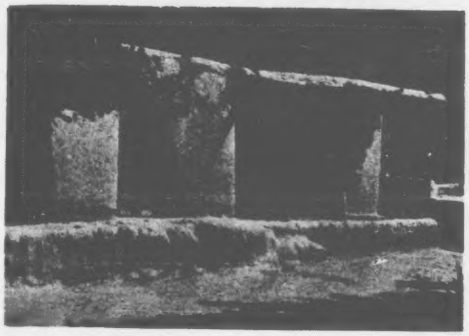
The Aq Kupruk compound, in addition to the residential quarters, usually includes storage sheds and outdoor privy, animal pens, cooking areas (an enclosed area for winter, exposed for summer), and vegetable garden, occasionally with a small irrigation canal (*jui*). Fuel used in cooking includes dried animal dung cakes, *busa* (an oily bush collected from the hillsides), and charcoal.

Household goods consist mainly of cooking utensils, teapots, cups and saucers, religious mementos, heirlooms (guns, swords, brass and tin-plated copper objects), storage chests and containers, stone and pottery lamps. The more affluent will own kerosene lanterns, pressure lamps, and samovars.

In the summer, families sleep outdoors on specially constructed tamped earth platforms or on rooftops. A few sleep on rope beds with a wooden frame, but most use a thick mattress which they roll up and stack inside the houses during the day. Some people use mosquito netting.* Fleas and lice periodically plague the people of Aq Kupruk.

Another major dwelling type, the portable yurt (*khergah*, Dari; *ooee*, Uzbaki Turkic), a reflection of the Uzbak's nomadic Central Asian past, is a wooden-framed, round-roofed, felt-covered hut. None of the people of Aq Kupruk are even seminomadic today, yet frequently they put up yurts inside their compounds and live in them during the hot summer months.** Many Aq Kupruk farm families, however, still follow transhumant agricultural patterns. In summer, they move with their families to highland fields. Household goods and yurts are transported on donkey and, rarely, camel back. Even cattle are used as beasts of transport. The farmers set up camp near a threshing floor hardened through time, and in a month or two reap, thresh, and winnow wheat, and later pick melons. Almost all have returned to Aq Kupruk by late September.





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*Mosquitoes have been coming back to the area since the World Health Organization's malaria eradication project ended in 1962.

**The yurt is easy to keep clean: inside, personal belongings hang from wooden hooks supported in the frames or nestled in intricately carved and painted wooden chests, a specialty of the Hazara living at Sangcharak, another bazaar center farther west.

A shopkeeper at the bazaar.

Film Dialogue

ashhadu anna la ilaha illa llahu wa anna muhammadam rasulu llah.

(There is no God but God and Mohammed is his messenger.)

Sound of the morning prayer as dawn breaks upon the bazaar.

Film Dialogue

Only a few shops in Aq Kupruk open daily. Most, however, do business on the two bazaar days a week when artisans, farmers and herdsmen come from surrounding areas to barter or buy produce, wares and services, and to relax, gossip and exchange news in teahouses.

Land Owned by Shopowners: 1972*

	Total Shopowners	Unirrigated	Irrigated	% Owning Land
Tajik	82	42	3	53%
Saadat	28	22	4	79%
Uzbak	13	7	1	54%
Khoja	8	2	2	25%

*In 1965 *all* shopowners owned land.

Family organization at Sokhta and Aq Kupruk is fairly typical of north Afghanistan. At Sokhta a number of related nuclear families live together with their retainers. In Aq Kupruk, the single nuclear family is more common, with possibly one or more grandparents living with one of their sons: in 1972 about 75 per cent were nuclear families; 20 per cent lineal joint; and 5 per cent collateral joint. Sometimes the grandparents move from one son's residence to another. Several factors have caused this evolution away from the idealized extended, three-generational family that characterized pre-1880 Afghanistan: the migration of many groups from south to north; the fragmentation of landholding because of the inheritance patterns; marriages outside the preferred inner family circle because of a shortage of marriageable cousins. In addition, most villages in the north have become ethnically mixed, and over 50 per cent of the village population are teen-agers and children, whose experiences in school tend to lead toward lasting, extra-kin friendships.

The Aq Kupruk Bazaar

Aq Kupruk, because of its intermediate position between true town and true village, illustrates many of the changes occurring today outside Kabul, the national capital. For two Afghanistans exist. Kabul, which is rapidly modernizing, and the rest of the country, which lags far behind.

The economy of Aq Kupruk can still be described as a Neolithic farming self-sufficiency in an Iron Age technology. After World War II, land began to lose its primary role as a traditional source of power in Aq Kupruk. In the past people had used their surplus cash to purchase more land. Today most farmers own land, as do most of the merchants, and surplus cash is used to purchase additional commodity and luxury items. And although much barter existed in Aq Kupruk's bazaar as late as 1959, cash and carry is the rule today and credit is available, at very high interest rates, with shopowners serving as money lenders.

No formalized association exists among the shopowners, in keeping with the general noncooperation of the peasant-tribal society. Nor does one find the guild-like institutions, such as those thriving among full-time specialists in other large towns and cities. However, a *kalantar-i-bazaar* or chief among merchants is informally chosen among the permanently resident shopowners and presides over the infrequent meetings held by any or all of them. The *kalantar-i-bazaar* also serves as intermediator between the bazaar merchants and the district governor. If a problem cannot be solved by the *kalantar*, he submits it to the town council for binding arbitration.

Most shopowners live in Aq Kupruk. About 35 per cent live outside the town, but many of these are seasonal shopkeepers, so only 13 live permanently outside Aq Kupruk. Two men come from Zari each bazaar day to sell rugs and cloth; three arrive from Sholgara on bazaar days, bringing in such exotica as the popular plastic sandals now manufactured in Kabul, Chinese notepaper, contraceptive devices, plastic dolls, pens, pencils, and erasers. Eight shopkeepers come down from nearby Sokhta village.

The veritable revolution in the Third World communications brought about by the battery-powered transistor radio has not missed Aq Kupruk. In 1965 about 20 transistor radios existed in the village—12 in the various teahouses and *otel*. By 1972, the figure had increased to at least 50, all protected from dust by elaborately embroidered carrying cases. The combination tailor, watch-and-radio repairman had a constant backlog of broken-down radios filling every nook and cranny of his shop.

The number of shops open in the Aq Kupruk bazaar reflects both seasonal activity and the commercial adjustments that followed provincial administrative changes in the 1960s. At its peak, the bazaar at Aq Kupruk has 101 functioning shops, of which 51 open daily. When the agricultural season has ebbed and all the semi-nomadic pastoralists (*maldar*) have passed through the town, the number of shops open daily drops to about 22.

Film Dialogue

I have a number to Kabul. When shall I dial? Don't you dial a number to Kabul? No? Well, do that, Dial it in your name. Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes . . . .

Telephone operator to another
operator up the line

Abdul Karim, owner of a shop in Aq Kupruk.

After farmers and others sell their produce and wares on the open market (*maydan* or *maidan*), they go to the covered bazaar to shop and then return to their homes in the hills or elsewhere. Items sold on the *maydan* include agricultural and dairy products; flat-weave rugs (*gelims*) from the Hazarajat (those made by the women of Sangcharak are especially prized, but Turkoman *gelims* are the most prized of all); pottery and matting from Sholgara; grapes from Sangcharak; wooden spoons made locally. Some Hazara bring rock salt from the surrounding mountains.

By late July, tomatoes, melons, cucumbers, squashes, and rice are also sold in the *maydan*, as well as in the seasonal shops. The increase in the number of these shops (mainly selling foodstuffs) since 1965 (from 8 to 18) and the increase in the number of butchers (from 5 to 11) indicates the return of relative prosperity to Aq Kupruk. Even in the drought years of 1970 and 1971, which drastically affected areas farther south and west, Aq Kupruk was able to feed its own and even export some wheat to nearby stricken areas.

Another sign of increased prosperity is the rise in the number of itinerant artisans passing through Aq Kupruk: a cupmender, a knife sharpener, several cobblers (one from as far away as Gurziwan, south of Maimana). Many itinerant specialists travel across the mountains and foothills of northern Afghanistan, often remaining in one area for several bazaar days. Sometimes they range from Herat to Kunduz and back. Barbers, local and itinerant, shift from restaurants (*otel*) to teahouses (*samovar*), shaving heads and trimming beards. Some barbers are musicians, and all perform circumcisions.

Bazaar shops and most homes in Aq Kupruk are heated by charcoal braziers (*manghal*), over which low wooden tables are placed. A large blanket is spread over the table so that it drapes to the floor. Whole families sit around the *sandali*, as the system is called, covering legs, arms, and much of their bodies under the blanket to absorb the heat.

Three lorries ply between Sholgara and Aq Kupruk on bazaar days: two are owned by shopowners in Sholgara; the other is a recent acquisition of the Sufi Sahib. Each Friday about 18-20 shopowners from Aq Kupruk make the trip to Zari, a bazaar town to the west, on Sufi Sahib's lorry. They are all Tajik *bonjaragi** and *bazazi*** owners and make the trip only during the late summer-early fall peak periods. The Aq Kupruk visitors not only sell their wares in the open air bazaar, but purchase items to sell in Aq Kupruk, especially dried apricots, ripe melons, and animal skins. Sholgara has the same bazaar days as Aq Kupruk (Monday, Thursday), and a much more widespread and active daily bazaar. Sholgara's growth began with its administrative upgrading in 1961. A total of about 900 men from small villages and households in the Aq Kupruk area moved to the vicinity of Sholgara and there was an immediate upsurge in bazaar activity. At present some

**Bonjaragi*, general stores which specialize in imports (as well as a wide range of local and regional produce): Russian matches and kerosene; English flashlight batteries; Czech kerosene stoves; Italian ballpoint pens; West German hurricane lanterns; Indian mantles for gaslamps; Pakistani and American cigarettes; Pakistani and Indian tea; Pakistani aluminum goods; Chinese condoms.

***Bazazi*: cloth shops sell Afghan and imported cloths, rayon, cotton, wool, silk.

200 shops are open daily, and more than 300 open each bazaar day. Sholgara has become the major communications center in the area and the largest commercial center south of Mazar-i-Sharif.

The Qishlaq of Mullah Ata Mohammad Boy

Mullah Ata Mohammad Boy* and his family live in a *qishlaq* about an hour's walk south of Aq Kupruk in the area called Sokhta, or "burned land." Legend has it that about "one hundred years ago" (the time usually given for any important, though unrecorded event in the past), a large forest existed at Sokhta, but lightning started a fire and burned the hillsides. (If, in fact, such an event did occur, the loess should have been appreciably richer.) *Qishlaq*, a Turkic term, refers to the winter quarters of nomads and seminomads, but is also used in Afghanistan to denote independent households which exist outside the village proper.

Mullah Ata Mohammad's father had purchased the bulk of the Sokhta land about 40 years ago, built several mud houses, and moved there from Aq Kupruk with his family because of some local difficulty which was never made clear. While Mullah Ata Mohammad performed his military service, his father died. The Mullah returned home in 1964 and immediately purchased the remainder of the Sokhta land (making a total of 70 acres) from some Tajik in Aq Kupruk who needed cash for their sons' weddings. Mullah Ata Mohammad's entire group moved up the hill to a better drained area in a new compound.

In 1972 the household consisted of 23 people, including three nuclear families, two unmarried brothers, four unmarried sisters, and three retainers (two teenage boys and one middle-aged farmer):

Mullah Ata Mohammad Boy (about 30 years old), wife, six-month-old son, three- and five-year-old daughters; owns 15 acres.

Juma Boy (about 38), wife, five-year-old son, six-year-old daughter, nine-month-old daughter; owns 15 acres.

Jura Boy (27 years), wife, two- and three-year-old-sons; 15 acres.

Rozi Boy (22 years), unmarried; 15 acres.

Pir Mohammad (12 years), unmarried; 15 acres.

The rest of the land had been divided among five sisters, including one who lived in Aq Kupruk, a second wife to a leading *mullah*; but she spent almost as much time at Sokhta as in her husband's house.

Film Dialogue

Many yilaq *(summer quarters) exist in the hills around Aq Kupruk. The one at Sokhta evolved into a permanent, year-round residence* (qishlaq) *for part of an extended family and its hired help. From the* qishlaq, *flocks are grazed and sheared, and highland, unirrigated wheat reaped, threshed and winnowed.*

*Boy is the Uzbak (and sometimes Tajik) equivalent of *Khan*, a loose status designation for adult male members of important families, not necessarily leaders of village or tribal units.

Film Dialogue

When we arrived here . . .
We were amazed how tall the wheat had grown.
It grew so tall . . .
That the stalks bent over.

Here we grow the best wheat.
In a day a man can cut nearly 100 pounds.
If God wills we shall cut 7, 14 or 21 tons.
We call this area Sokhta . . . the burned land.

The past two years have been hard.
No one can explain God's will.
No rain has fallen and many are hungry.

We get up early in this hot climate.
We have tea and bread and work until 4 in the afternoon.
We supervise our shepherds and farmers.
In the spring my brother sends me sheepskins.
I preserve them in salt and prepare them for sale.
This is the kind of work we do.

Mullah Ata Mohammed

Mullah Ata

Jura Boy

Rozi Boy.

During the summer harvest, Juma Boy and Jura Boy move into yurts; Juma Boy just outside his house, Jura Boy on a hilltop near his fields. All the brothers work in the fields, but the youngest, Pir Mohammad (not yet old enough to be called "Boy"), had been spoiled by his older brothers and did not know how to cut wheat properly, a shortcoming which made him the butt of many jokes—even from the retainers and the hired laborers. Juma Boy is the eldest, although he is not head of the family. He is generally considered to be a clown or "slightly touched by the hand of Allah," that is, nutty. He does nothing to counter these suspicions.

Of the five brothers, only Mullah Ata Mohammad can read and write. He was trained in the Aq Kupruk religious school (*madrassa*), and adopted the title, "Mullah," although many in Aq Kupruk criticize him for this.* Mullah Ata Mohammad did not lead prayers in any of the mosques in Aq Kupruk, but he did lead the five daily prayers when present in his *qishlaq*. All three of the brothers with sons want them to attend the *madrassa*, and if possible go on to study with learned religious scholars (*maulvi*) in Mazar-i-Sharif. They all consider the government school in Aq Kupruk to be useless, and consider the study of Islam, a way of life, to be much more practical than the history, arithmetic, and other subjects taught in the secular school.

Mullah Ata Mohammad traveled to Mazar-i-Sharif, Kabul, and Kunduz during his army service. Juma Boy's army career, some 14 years earlier than the Mullah's, was spent in Kabul. Jura Boy had been to Mazar-i-Sharif and Kabul, but in 1972 the two younger brothers had never been farther afield than Aq Kupruk.

The *qishlaq* itself consists of a large, walled compound, divided into two sections. The inner area has a rectangular house with rooms leading onto a veranda, and each woman, including the unmarried sisters, has her own set of rooms. The outer area, separated from the inner by a separate wall with a large wooden door to guarantee privacy, includes the guest house, the milking area, a courtyard, and animal stables. Two bachelor brothers sleep in the same area as the retainers but Juma Boy has built a smaller compound adjacent.

No streams reach into the high area of Sokhta, and the five brothers, using iron adzes, picks, sledge hammers, wedges, and crowbars, have ingeniously dug seven cisterns in the solid limestone. Rain water and snow melt are led into the cisterns by means of shallow, downhill grooves. At five wells, water is drawn using a leather bucket and rope, but two of the cisterns have a windlass contraption and goatskin buckets. When the sheep are in the *qishlaq*, they are watered from the cisterns. Cattle are always kept in the *qishlaq*, and in winter are kept in storage pens which have been cut horizontally in the hillsides. Grain and flour are also stored in such artificial caves.

The five brothers in 1972 owned a total of 210 sheep and goats; half were *qarakul* (the so-called, misnamed, Persian lamb), the rest mainly fat-tailed sheep. The goats are milked while in the Sokhta, and various dairy products form a major part of the diet.

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*In Islam any man can proclaim himself "Mullah," but consensus of the people in the area must approve the self-appointment.

A shepherd from Maimana, Mohammadzai Durrani Pushtun, had cared for the flock for seven years. A bachelor, he had not visited his family for three years. His contract called for 20 days of vacation a year, but he usually spent the time with friends in Sholgara. His salary was 30,000 afghanis* per year or about 145 afghanis per animal, but he was economically liable for any missing sheep and goats. The shepherd had a hired assistant and three large mastiff-like herd dogs (*sag-i-ramah*)** to help protect the herd from human and other animal predators.

The annual cycle of the herd is interesting and nothing like that of the seminomadic *maldar*. In October, the shepherd leads the herd over the central mountains via Band-i-Amir all the way to the hills outside Spin Baldak near the Durand Line, which separates Afghanistan from Pakistan. When snow comes the herd eats *alaf, busa*, and other grasses under the snow, pawing through the snow to reach the hardy plants. In late March, the shepherd moves the flock to the Band-i-Amir area, and here, in April, the lambing season takes place.***

Jura Boy joins the herd in the Band-i-Amir area, and sends *qarakul* lambskins to Mullah Ata Mohammad, who prepares them for sale in Mazar-i-Sharif. The lambs are killed at birth, so that the skins will be soft and bring higher prices.**** About mid-July, the herd moves to Sokhta, where the milking takes place. In August the shepherd, his assistant, and the five brothers shear the sheep with locally made, scissors-type shears, the blades of which are not permanently joined for better flexibility and to minimize nicking the sheep. The wool is used to make felt and to spin into thread for weaving a large number of domestic items. The surplus is sold in Aq Kupruk, Sholgara, and Mazar-i-Sharif. The cycle begins again in October, and the herd takes the long trail toward Spin Baldak.

Mullah Ata Mohammad maintains close touch with what transpires in Aq Kupruk. About 1965, he acquired a cloth shop in the bazaar. Almost daily, he walks down (or rides a donkey) from Sokhta, opens his shop, and holds court. He is a moneylender, and many people in Aq Kupruk owe him money. Often the loans are not meant to be repaid; loans obligate the borrower to support the lender in the event of factional disputes. If a borrower defaults or leaves the area, however, considerable effort is expended to collect the money.

Mullah Ata Mohammad hires five laborers each year from Kishindi to help reap, thresh, and winnow the fields of all five brothers, taken in turn. Each laborer received 70 kilos of wheat for each six days of work. One man can cut about 45 kilos per day, of which about 11 kilos goes to the laborer, or about one-quarter to one-fifth of the crop. The laborers usually bring their families with them and set up *chapari* near the *khirman*. As part of the deal, the same laborers come back in the spring to help plow and plant the wheat. The grain is then carried by pack animal to the mill in Aq Kupruk.

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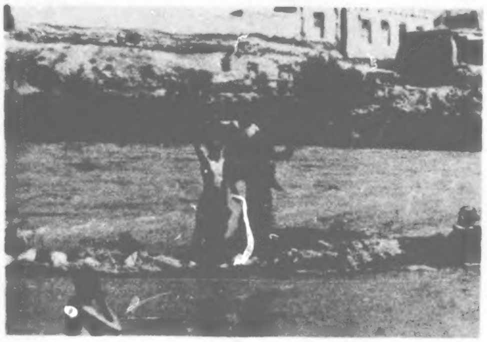
*At the 1972 rate of about 90 afs. to $1, his annual income was approximately $333; at the present rate of about 50 to 1, about $600, which compared to the salaries of Afghan civil servants is not bad. A Kabul University professor, for example, gets about $40 per month as do most mid-range bureaucrats.

**The Mullah Ata Mohammad had three such dogs to guard his compound. He said neither rocks nor bullets could stop them, but these dogs seldom attack unless ordered to by their masters. Instead, they set up a howl as strangers approach. Then the inhabitants come out to see who has arrived—and call off the dogs.

***One Afghan herding custom has frustrated a generation of foreign livestock specialists. The lambs, kids, and calves are muzzled or kept away from their mothers and only permitted to feed once or twice a day, potentially inhibiting their growth. Foreign technicians have been unable to convince Afghan herdsmen that the milk will continue if the young ones are permitted to suck frequently.

****A Qarakul Institute with headquarters in Kabul has been attempting to improve breeding and preparation procedures since 1966, and as a result, the Afghans have been able to capture a larger percentage of the world's market through the auctions held periodically in London. The skins are graded carefully before being flown to foreign makers. The golden skin is the most highly prized, followed by varying degrees of browns, blacks, and grays (Zondag, 1974).



The *Jui* and the Mill: Communal Work

Contrary to popular belief, villagers are fundamentally non-cooperative creatures outside their own immediate kin-groups and are not communally oriented. The annual cleaning and repairing of main canals on either side of the river, the *jui*, is a good example. The *jui* channels water into the gardens and orchards of the irrigated land (*abi*), and into the mills which grind wheat into flour. All those who live along the river bank and benefit from the water to irrigate their gardens assist in the work, as do those who own or expect to use one of the mills.

The work begins in early July when a diversion weir is constructed at the entrance to the *jui*. Boulders chinked with sage, which expands when wet, are held in place by large, tripod-shaped wooden braces. In the swollen river the work may be dangerous and occasionally men are injured by fast moving boulders or the collapse of part of the weir under construction. Spectators sometimes strip to the waist and join in as the work progresses. Gratuitous advice flows from all directions, but out of the seeming chaos, the weir takes shape. It must be repaired periodically as the swift river erodes the sage and tugs at the boulders and wooden frames.

In 1972, between July 25-27 about 50 men built a dam of stones and sage to block water from the *jui*. Then they cleared the accumulated silts and large stones from the bottom and sides so that the paddles on the flywheels of the mills would not be damaged nor the water flow impeded.* The clearing work was done with shovels, at times with a rope attached; two men pulled the shovel blade and one man guided the handle. Two-man, stretcher-like carryalls are the common means of removing rocks and silt from the lower parts of the canals.

The men worked until 7:15 P.M. on July 25 and 26, and finally completed the task on July 27, when they destroyed the dam and allowed the water again to flow into the *jui* and down the sluices to operate the mills. No one was paid for his effort, but all enjoyed the comradely work and horseplay.

Jeshn: National Independence Day

The day before *Jeshn*, in August 1972, people began pouring into Aq Kupruk. The announcement of *buzkashi* was largely responsible for the turnout. The District Governor (*alakadar*) forbade public gambling, but there was gambling nonetheless.**

On *Jeshn* morning (August 23), the District Governor appeared in his best Western-style suit and shoes. The bazaar had been decorated with colorful cloth hangings donated (not always voluntarily) by local cloth merchants. The town crier roamed up and down the bazaar street, announcing that all should come to the shop of Sufi Sahib, an influential local leader, where a radio would broadcast an address by King Mohammad Zahir, since deposed, to be followed by the District Governor's re-reading of the text. The people, however, were more interested in wandering through the colorful bazaar and, since *Jeshn* is traditionally a time to buy new clothes, strutting about in their fresh finery. Looking through Viewmasters at slides of Mecca, Medina, Mashhad, and such Western cities as Paris, London, and New York was also a popular diversion. (The owners of the Viewmasters sometimes attracted customers by promising views of sexual delights as well, but did not deliver.)

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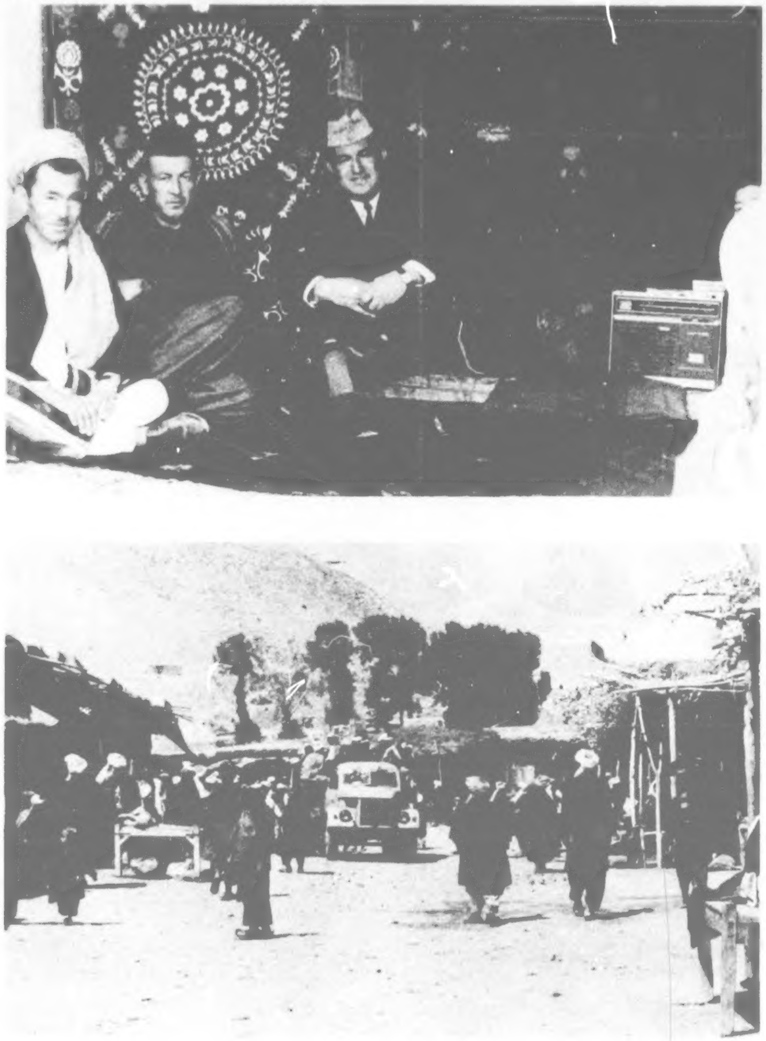
*See "Wheat Cycle," film and film essay.

**One popular game uses a large die, with figures (king, jack, queen) and animals (donkey, elephant, cock) on each of its six sides. Gamblers bet on which side will land face up by placing money on a cloth divided into six squares with the same painted figures and animals.

Below, the 1972 *Alakadar,* and the truckload of celebrants arriving for *Jeshn.*



Below, colorful cloth hangings on shops.

Wrestling

The first afternoon featured wrestling in front of the boys' school. The spectators gathered in a wide circle around the participants. Coaches (retired champion wrestlers) from various villages select contestants on the spot, for they have watched the young men develop and know their fighting capabilities. The contestants are nervous, for losing a match means losing face not only personally but also for the entire village.* A man picked to wrestle often exhibits signs of panic, with eyes rolling and lips trembling. Struggling to escape, he may pray and moan for some time before the match can begin. Then the two coaches drag their chosen victims to the center of the ring and stand them side by side to see if they are about the same height and weight. Either coach or contestants may protest an obvious mismatch, and the glassy-eyed contestants usually leave the decision to others. If both sides agree, the contestants return to their respective groups of friends and relatives who prepare them for the match.

Clothing must be worn in a prescribed manner. Many wrestlers wear two turban caps as protection in falls. A many-colored cloak (*chapan*) must be worn, with a cummerbund or kerchief tied loosely around the waist. Pajama-like pantaloons (*tombon*) complete the costume. The men wrestle barefooted.

Before the action begins, the ground is sprinkled with water to keep down the dust, and more water is sprinkled between matches. The two coaches act as referees and first search the contestants for hidden weapons.

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*In 1972, a mullah from Zari, who had been baiting the Aq Kupruk wrestlers, was challenged. After putting up a good fight for several minutes, the mullah walked away, saying he was tired. Being a mullah, he escaped a beating, but he was unmercifully kidded the rest of the day.

The two wrestlers stand apart and pray for God's support, touching their chins as a sign of respect and submission to God's will. They advance on each other, formally shake hands (both hands) and bow low. They then walk in circles around the edge of the crowd, loosening up, readjusting their cummerbunds, tightening them again and again, stalling for time. The impatient spectators urge them to fight. At long last they face one another, rocking from side to side and flailing their outstretched arms over their heads, looking rather like a pair of mating scorpions. The object of the match is to throw one's opponent and pin his shoulders to the ground. The rules are simple: wrestlers may grab arms, legs, and the *chapan*, but not the *tombon*. Clothing is often ripped and must be replaced before the match continues. Spectators gladly loan *chapan* to be torn to shreds, for the honor of the village rests on the outcome.

Balance is all important. Generally, the contestants grab each other's forearms, and move sideways in a crablike rocking motion, testing for strength and balance. Often a man will leap high in the air, ending up behind his antagonist with a headlock. Sometimes one such move ends a match. Most matches end within five minutes but some may last as long as one-half hour.

There is no specified time to declare a pin. If a man's shoulders touch flat on the ground, he is pinned. When it seems apparent that one man has pinned another, the coach of the winner lifts his man by the waist, or pats the winner on the back, and runs around the spectator's circle. The victor clasps his hands over his head as the crowd applauds. The coach deposits the wrestler in front of the *alakadar* and the village elders, who disseminate the prizes, usually cash or a turban cloth or both. The opposing coach may protest. The cheers or jeers of the crowd determine whether or not the match should continue. The District Governor and the elders make the final decision.

Fights occasionally break out among the crowd, and police restore order with a flailing of fists and belts. Much money passes hands, for betting on individual performers is common.

In rural Afghanistan, entertainment is at a premium. Only the transistor radio and the hand-cranked gramophone have penetrated the mud hut and the teahouse. The peasant-tribal society honors its folk musicians and tale-tellers and people often travel for miles to hear a performance, which usually accompanies celebrations of births, circumcisions, or marriages. Celebrants sometimes hire professional or local performers, almost always men. Village women play musical instruments, sing and dance inside their own compounds, but seldom—if ever—perform in public. In fact, one seldom sees a woman in a teahouse where professional entertainers perform.

The absence of women performers long ago led to the practice of female impersonation. Such professionals dance—and sometimes sing—to the accompaniment of drums or tambourines,

A dancing boy performs in an Aq Kupruk teahouse.

stringed instruments, and sometimes a *surnai*, a reed instrument resembling and sounding like a bagpipe chanter or oboe. The dancing boy usually wears anklets of bells, bells on his clothes, and often uses polished wooden castanets to beat out the rhythm. Generations ago many dancing boys were eunuchs, but castration is infrequent today. Some dancers wear talcum powder on their faces to hide their beards. Most shave several times a day and use mascara, rouge, and lipstick to enhance their beauty. Some dancing boys supplement their income serving as male prostitutes. Sometimes they form a partnership with a lover, such as a lorry driver, and travel together from town to town.

Most dancing boys are itinerants who perform in teahouses on evenings before bazaar days. Often they sit in the bazaar during the day, announcing by song the time and place of their evening performances—or, in a modern innovation, playing typical songs and dance music on portable cassette tape recorders. The dancing boys earn their money by collecting a certain percentage of the admission paid at the door of the teahouse. The fee was afs. 10 during *Jeshn* 1972 in Aq Kupruk and the troupe consisted of two dancing boys and two instrumentalists for a *dhambura* (two-stringed instrument plucked with bone plectum) and a *zerbagali* (single-headed, hourglass-shaped, pottery membranophone). The audience participates with enthusiastic hand clapping, finger snapping, whistling, and foot stamping.

Buzkashi

One of the oldest sports of Central Asia, *buzkashi* is essentially a game of horsemanship* which involves two teams and emphasizes individual performance. A goat, or more often today a

***Buzkashi* horses are pampered and expensive. Often better fed than people, they eat barley twice a day, melons in season, and occasional mixes of barley, raw eggs, and butter. Horses are trained for about five years before being committed to the playing field.

calf, is decapitated, gutted, and placed in a circle marked on the ground. Horsemen gather from the two teams, which can vary in size from three or four to a thousand, depending on the size of the field, the event celebrated, and the prizes offered. (In the early fall, after the harvest, villagers all over northern Afghanistan play sandlot *buzkashi* over ploughed fields). At a given signal the game begins. The horsemen try to pick up the carcass and ride with it to a boundary point (usually less than a mile away), then return to drop it inside a circle at the starting point. The rules are rather flexible, and the players ride with the élan of their Central Asian ancestors. The earth almost seems to move as they thunder by. Watching the game, one is impressed with the man-horse teamwork and can see how this game provided excellent training for the mobile shock cavalry which developed in Central Asia and Mongolia. (Even Alexander the Great could not defeat it. The cavalry Alexander met fought in the manner of the American Plains Indians, riding in circles around his less mobile forces, firing arrows from all angles and positions.)

Buzkashi can probably best be described as a combination of polo, mounted football, and unorganized mayhem. Injuries are common and the frequently used whips draw blood from both horses and men, even though most riders wear heavily padded fur hats and clothing, plus high boots with tall heels to hook in the stirrups. Usually *buzkashi* is played on the wide open fields of the north up hillsides, down valleys, and even across graveyards. A variant, *buzkashi-yi-darya*, is played in the river at Aq Kupruk. The rushing water and moving pebbles and boulders make this variety especially dangerous.

Although technically a team sport, the individual who scores a goal gets a prize. The sport is highly representative of Afghan culture, perhaps best described as fierce individual competition within a framework of loose cooperation. All successful *buzkashi* players and wrestlers gain status, and if a man is successful in both, he is doubly honored. (Abdul Karim, a landholding farmer who also owns a shop in the Aq Kupruk bazaar, is seen wearing white and riding a white horse. Twice in the same day, he is awarded a prize by the District Governor.)

FILM LINK

Belief Systems in Aq Kupruk

Islam as practiced in rural Afghanistan, among villagers as well as seminomadic peoples, often appears strange to sophisticated religious scholars, for local pre-Islamic beliefs are interwoven with Muslim orthodoxy. Traditionalist religious leaders tolerate and support these beliefs, particularly predestination, out of inertia and ignorance and also because they help justify and perpetuate the old class and power structure.

The village mullah is often a nonliterate or semiliterate farmer who functions as a part-time religious leader. Islam has no organized clergy, and every man can be a mullah.* Anyone can lead a prayer, if accepted by the community. But hierarchies have nonetheless arisen and, in Aq Kupruk, the following are accepted as religious leaders in ascending order of importance: *talib* (student in the *madrassa*, or mosque school, which formally trains mullahs); *Maulwi* (four teachers in Aq Kupruk *madrassa*); *Maulana* (very learned religious scholars, none in Aq Kupruk, nearest in Mazar-i-Sharif); *Afha* (leader of large sect, nearest in Mazar).

A surprising number of Aq Kupruk men over twenty years of age have made the *hajj* (Pilgrimage) to Mecca, Islam's paramount holy city. In the Alakadari of Kishindi over 1,000 men (out of the officially estimated population of 19,005) had made the *hajj*, an indication of the relative wealth of the area when compared with the rest of Afghanistan and the Middle East in general.

In 1972, there were six functioning mosques in Aq Kupruk and two in the hills nearby, one at Sokhta and another to the west of Aq Kupruk. In addition, there are a number of saint's shrines, although people seem to remember little of their origins and none have special festival days. An exception is the shrine to Khoja Boland, about whom the people have an interesting legend. Khoja Boland, a saintly soldier in life, always warns Aq Kupruk when danger approaches by firing his rifle. When a cholera epidemic occurred in northern Afghanistan in 1965, the people of Aq Kupruk held a ritual feast (*khyrat*) to ward off the evil spirits causing the disease. All contributed what they could to the feast and the best cooks (always men) prepared the meal—ritually sacrificed animals, pilau, and sweet halwa. Everyone, even visitors, received shares. The mullahs at the feast asked God to keep the cholera away: only four people died when the epidemic reached Aq Kupruk, and many local residents swore on the Koran that they heard Khoja Boland fire his rifle in the early afternoon before the first death.

Supernatural creatures also harass the people of Aq Kupruk. The jinns, undefinable spirits, try to possess the living. Some are evil while others are merely jokesters. All possessed persons must be exorcised because jinns are considered to be the main cause of insanity and some diseases. The jinn replaces the scientific "germ" for nonliterate Afghans. Moreover, it is commonly believed in Aq Kupruk that no one dies a natural death. The causes must always be sought, and the evil jinn driven away from the corpse so that the soul and body can enter Paradise cleansed. (In addition, the people never remove vegetation from graveyards, for they believe that jinns imprisoned in the roots will escape and cause the death of someone in the family.)

Talismans (*taawiz*) are in common use. Most are purchased from the mullahs, who double as practitioners of white magic. Many elements of Central Asian shamanism and animism lurk in these corners of belief and ritual in Aq Kupruk. The people sew amulets on their clothing or wear them about their necks. *Taawiz*

*To be called Sufi Sahib (one who studies the mystical aspects of Islam), a man must read the Koran 113 times and maintain 40 days of silence. Aq Kupruk has one Sufi Sahib. In addition to extensive landholdings and a block of shops in the bazaar, he owns a Russian lorry which carries goods and passengers between Sholgara and Aq Kupruk, and between Zari and Aq Kupruk, on bazaar days. Personal wealth, literacy, and religious status combine to give considerable power to such individuals in Aq Kupruk.

can be found for practically everything from curing the common cold to making a man irresistible to women—or a specific woman. Certain magic formulae, all considered locally to be Islamic, must be chanted (or blown) over the *taawiz* by a mullah to make them effective.*

* * * *

The people of Aq Kupruk live in a peasant-tribal society, the attributes of which are broadly applicable to most of the developing world. These attributes tend to perpetuate an *inward-looking* society, in which men and women are born into a set of answers. In the pluralistic Western, developed world, people are born into a *set of questions* (an *outward-looking* society). Yet Aq Kupruk is neither changeless, timeless, nor genuinely isolated. It has links which already filter up to the national level. Communications and transportation improvements as well as administrative changes are disrupting life from the outside and secular education's influence is subtle but perhaps ultimately more radical.The town and region are adjusting, and more and more often people too must respond individually to a new set of alternatives. Life along the Balkh River in northern Afghanistan is, as it long has been, at a cultural crossroad.

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*A blind Qori Sahib (one who can quote the Koran in its entirety) sold me a wolf's astragulus for afs. 500 in 1972. He had prayed and blown over the amulet for 24 hours without a break. One which had simply been blessed sold for afs. 30. The function of the amulet is to preserve the owner from an enemy's evil eye. A hole had been drilled through the astragulus and by viewing the enemy through the hole, one man neutralizes his power. The pubic sympysis of a female wolf also has interesting powers. (When a woman is viewed through the natural hole, she becomes the sexual slave of the viewer.) And according to Uzbak women, the head of a hoopoe is especially effective in bringing peace in a household with more than one wife. Both men and women acquire hoopoe heads to make them popular. (The number of examples—snake bones, phallic-shaped rocks, flags, sheaves of wheat—could be multiplied indefinitely.)

AFGHANISTAN

2

Education

NAIM AND JABAR

by LOUIS DUPREE

The friendship between Naim, age 14, and Jabar, age 15, was formed in childhood and has remained firm through adolescence. Until 1972, when this film was made, the two boys' experiences were much like those of Afghan youths in other small towns in rural Afghanistan. There, three separate institutions compete—and in some ways complement one another—in the socialization processes which prepare a child for adulthood. The family and religious life, particularly as the latter is institutionalized in the mosque and the mosque school, are the most important. Secondly, the government's influence is growing, as the national bureaucracy spreads to the provinces, and third, formal secular education is increasingly significant in determining the futures of young people like Naim and Jabar. Still, the basically peasant society of Aq Kupruk is just beginning to feel a few small fissures in its traditional structure. The real changes and tensions are yet to come as new expectations prompt more young men to venture beyond the cultural boundaries of the village.

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Abdul Jabar and Mohammad Naim became friends in 1965, when both were students at the Aq Kupruk boys' school, Jabar then being in second grade and Naim in first. They played together after school and during summer vacations worked with their families making bricks, repairing roofs, or performing other chores around their home compounds. They also joined forces in helping each other's family in the irrigated gardens or in the fields.

Jabar, who had ranked first in his sixth-grade class, left in the fall of 1971 to attend a boarding school, Ali Sher Nawai, in Mazar-i-Sharif. All that year, Naim waited anxiously for his friend's return. Late in 1972, they renewed their friendship as though they had never been apart, although Naim now looked upon Jabar as being more mature and worldly, having lived for a year in the city. Naim had never been outside Aq Kupruk. Jabar came back with a Western sports coat purchased in Mazar's bazaar, and refused to wear a turban, which he considered "country."

Jabar's father, Sayyid Jalal, wants his son to obtain an appointment in the Afghan bureaucracy, preferably a ministry in Kabul. Jabar himself wants to be a doctor and he hopes to be accepted by the Faculty of Medicine at Kabul University, or the Ningrahar Medical School at Jalalabad.

Naim, Jabar, and a younger brother help repair an irrigation canal.

Film Dialogue

My first trip to Mazar, we got to Pul-i-Baraq, and I asked my father, "Is this Buina Quara?"

And he said, "Yes."

When we got to Buina Qara, I asked "Is this Mazar?"

And he said, "Yes."

Then we changed trucks.

I asked my father, "Where are we going?"

He said, "Somewhere near Mazar."

We arrived in Mazar at the sunset prayer. What a big, beautiful city!

Jabar en route to Mazar

Film Dialogue

If I'm refused, my heart will break, by God!

A sad ending . . . . And if they admit you?

Admit me . . . . Wow! !

You'd be so happy, you'd sprout wings.

I'd conquer Aq Kupruk.

He'd take it like an invader!

Naim and Jabar

When Naim finished the sixth class in Aq Kupruk he too planned to attend Ali Sher Nawai in Mazar, and he went to register there with great expectations and anxieties. Jabar, with a year of experience in the city, guided his friend through what Naim must have felt was the most beautiful and confusing place in the world. Shedding the symbols of his traditional village in the same way Jabar had a year earlier, Naim bought a secondhand sport jacket, and removed his turban to walk bareheaded in Mazar's busy streets.

During an interview with the city's superintendent of schools, Naim's hopes of attending the Ali Sher Nawai school were quickly destroyed when the official informed him that the Ministry of Education in Kabul had just decided to phase out the school in Mazar. The seventh class, which Naim would have entered, had already been eliminated at the end of the school term in 1972. Jabar's 38-member eighth class was scheduled to graduate in 1976, at which point Ali Sher Nawai High School would cease to exist.

But an even more exciting proposition was then made for Naim—the superintendent recommended him for the prestigious Kabul military academy. This is a choice appointment for any Afghan boy, and was even more astonishing because Naim had not yet completed the seventh grade, the usual prerequisite for such a recommendation. Both Naim and Jabar were aghast at this unanticipated opportunity. Struck nearly speechless with excitement, they also were saddened by the prospect of a permanent separation that would result if Naim were indeed chosen for officers' training in Kabul.

Another sobering note throughout this excitement was that Naim first had to pass the academy's entrance exam, for which he was ill-prepared. Others, including Jabar, cautioned him repeatedly that the test would be difficult, and when the time finally came, he did not pass. He returned to Aq Kupruk, and now assists in his father's bazaar shop and in the family fields, following in his father's footsteps, as do the overwhelming majority of Afghan village boys.

Having briefly seen Mazar-i-Sharif, and been excited by what was for him its urban wonders, Naim may not remain happy in Aq Kupruk. His adoption of a more Western-style appearance in Mazar-i-Sharif signaled his expectation of a different, more modern life. By 1974 Naim was returning to Mazar at least seasonally to work as an apprentice mechanic.

There may be other opportunities for broadening Naim's horizons outside formal education. He could be conscripted to the labor corps for work on development projects. Or, at the age of 20, Naim may be called to serve two years in one of the branches of Afghanistan's military services: army, air force, police (urban), gendarmerie (rural). The Afghan military sponsors several educational programs that attempt to create national feelings while the young men are fulfilling their service obligations. In addition, a conscious effort is being made to create a dedicated, nationalist-oriented professional officer corps. Thirteen young men left Aq Kupruk in 1972 for two years of military duty; most will probably return, but some may remain in urban areas.

Informal Education: The Traditional World

In rural Afghanistan, the process of integration and identification with the group begins at birth. Among traditional, conservative, nonliterate Muslims, the birth of a male child is an auspicious event calling for a celebration. The birth establishes the virility of the father, the fertility of the mother, gives the family an heir to property and, most important, enhances family honor.

Usually a child receives its formal name on the third day after birth. Before this, a substitute name is used, to prevent an evil *jinn* from gaining control of the infant's soul by calling its real name. A mullah whispers *Allah-o-Akbar* (God is Great!) four times in the infant's ear, tells him of his illustrious ancestors, and exhorts him to be a good Muslim. The mullah sometimes gives the child its name, but often an elder brother of the father has this honor especially if the newborn is a boy (if the father dies this eldest paternal uncle assumes the father's role).

Mothers usually nurse babies until the children have several teeth, or until another baby is born. Some breast-feed children for two or three years, but the infant's diet includes solid foods—bread, milk products, melons, and noodle dishes—after the first year. If a mother has insufficient milk, she will engage a wet-nurse. Children sharing milk from a common human source are considered brothers and sisters and cannot marry. Weaning is abrupt, as the mother simply suspends breast feedings.

Film Dialogue

You look like you fell off a camel . . . All in pieces!

I'm happy all over.

You can sit up like a human. People'll say you're a wild man from the mountains.

But we're indoors . . . .

They look in the windows, that's the way of cities.

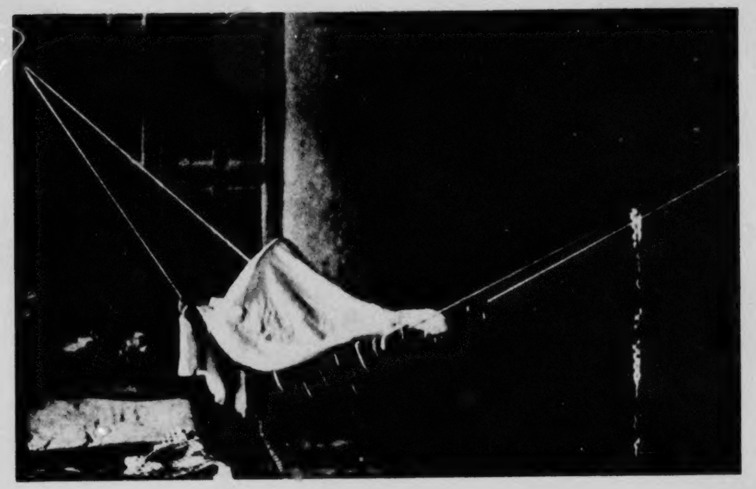
Naim and Jabar,
after the recommendation
to the academy

Film Dialogue

Why did you take off your turban?

My friend told me to. He said if his friends saw it . . . . They'd say he's a villager, he's not from the city.

Interview with Naim



Generally, a baby spends most of its time swaddled and tied into a cradle. Sometimes the mother (or an older sister) will carry it around on her shoulder, or lay it on the floor for visitors to gaze at and praise. While swaddled in the wooden cradles, boys are fitted with wooden, pipe-shaped penis holders tied at the waist to drain their urine through a hole in the cradle's bottom into a small clay pot underneath. Girls also wear urine drains, but with a small, flat opening instead of a pipe-like bowl.

Two types of wooden cradles exist: one with rockers, which is placed on the ground and rocked; the other, suspended from a sawhorse contraption and swung. The wooden cradle styles and swaddling techniques are reminders of the nomadic past of most Afghan ethnic groups, when cradles were securely tied on the backs of swaying camels, a common practice still among nonsedentary peoples. In addition, a hammock-like cloth cradle may be hung from tent or yurt poles, roof beams, or tree limbs in gardens.

Mothers table and toilet train their offspring at an early age. Initially they also wield the heavy hand of discipline (while fathers tend to be loving and indulgent with infants) and usually retain considerable influence over sons throughout their lives.

The youngest child in the family is always pampered until weaned. He or she will sit in the father's lap while guests are present, and be fed choice tidbits by doting relatives. Older boys serve the guests and other siblings, both male and female, watch impatiently from afar. When the youngest is displaced by the birth of another child, the older siblings see to it that the once-favored child adjusts quickly, if harshly, to their shared status. There is little time to bemoan one's fate; a child must learn his place rapidly in rural Afghanistan's rigidly sexually segregated society. Even the pampered youngest learns some humility early, and in his prepubescent teens a young male may be employed in the bi-monthly task of shaving the heads of the family's retainers.

Mothers encourage older siblings to punish younger ones for infractions. Special terms exist for oldest, older, and younger brothers and sisters. Brother-sister relationships become especially close as both get older, often even stronger than the bonds between fathers and daughters. Brother-brother rivalries increase, however, particularly as the father grows older and concern over inheritance intensifies.

Primogeniture does not exist. Girls inherit half-shares of land, and these plots become important parts of their dowries, while each son theoretically receives an equal share. Because all land is clearly not of equal quality, less-favored sons often squabble with more fortunate siblings. Sometimes a father will assign all his land to his sons before he dies, or gives the land *in toto* to the most capable (or favorite) son. In the latter case, the other sons usually receive cash compensation. Some will stay on to help work the land, sharing equally in the proceeds. At times, one or more of the dispossessed sons will purchase land from the land-owning brother, or lend the land-owning brother money, later gaining control of the land through debt default.

Learning by Doing: Work and Play

Children in Aq Kupruk are given responsibilities almost as soon as they learn to walk. Many of these assignments, however, are shared with siblings or age-mates so that play and camaraderie are important elements of the experience. Older brothers and sisters carry toddling infants piggyback as they herd the village flocks; even four- or five-year-olds sometimes watch large flocks on the hillsides or other pasturelands near Aq Kupruk. Most small children, with sacks and tins on their backs, collect dung, converting it to dry patties for use as fuel.

Wrestling, a popular sport in Afghanistan, begins at an early age.

Young boys and girls working together often get into fistfights, throw rocks and sticks at one another, or wrestle. Through these childhood conflicts they learn quite early their respective adult roles; the fights presage the patterns of leadership and sex roles to come. Often a younger brother will emerge as a stronger personality than his older brothers, and early in life, he will be accepted by consensus as the future family leader: no voting is necessary.

The rough and tumble children's games as seen in "Naim and Jabar" take many varieties, but they generally reflect the established pecking order. Usually the games begin with some sort of doggerel or memory exercises, or both. The following one is typical of the genre, and played by subteen boys and girls together:

The first player:	Where are you going?
Second:	To my brother's wedding.
First:	What are you going to give him?
Second:	A turban cloth.
Second then asks third:	Where are you going?
Third:	To my brother's wedding.
Second:	What are you going to give him?
Third:	A turban and a turban cap.

Third then asks fourth player the same question and so on around the circle. Each successive player must repeat all the items named and in the same order. When someone misses or cannot remember, the child is clouted over the head with a turban cap by the preceding player, and then chased by the others. The entire proceeding usually degenerates into a free-for-all, until one of the older children calls for a new game.

Sheep's knucklebones are used in a game that resembles both jacks and marbles.

Since life itself is perceived as a gamble to most rural Afghans, various games of chance are popular. Boys risk their meager pocket change on egg fighting as they try to smash each other's hard boiled eggs by bumping them end to end. Both boys and girls play *bujul bazi*, using sheep's knucklebones or similar objects in a game resembling a combination of jacks and marbles.

As children approach puberty, their games increasingly resemble adult games or mimic adult life styles. Small boys will ride the backs of older boys and play at *buzkashi*, trying to pick up a hide or skin. Many will wrestle, hoping one day to become champions of the popular sport. Frequently young boys dream of becoming lorry drivers, and the trucks themselves are symbols of change, the new awareness of a world outside the normal radius of the pedestrian. The few lorries which come to Aq Kupruk are surrounded by youthful admirers. Boys will tie strings to small boxes, fill the boxes with sand, and drag them along, pretending to be lorry drivers.

Some of the games reflect less pleasant aspects of rural life. Occasionally a few children will chase others, catch them and, holding their feet in the air, beat the soles vigorously. They are imitating a not uncommon sight at the government compound, where the district governor and his police "bastinado" men accused of crimes in order to obtain confessions. The government long ago declared the practice illegal, but the custom dies hard in the more remote areas. If nothing else the children's game is a form of political socialization.

Role Assimilation: Girls

Young girls play with toys related to their adult roles as mothers and homemakers—miniature wooden cradles and crude wooden or cloth dolls. They also practice spinning, using a small stone instead of a spindle. The girls' favorite recreation, however, is swinging on ropes suspended from sturdy garden trees.*

Prepubescent girls learn to wash clothes, care for younger children, fetch water (if boys are not around), peel and wash vegetables, and knead and prepare dough for baking bread. No special ceremonies initiate a girl into womanhood at her first menstrual period, but she is kept isolated from males because of her culturally defined impure state.

After puberty, she learns from her mother, older sisters, and aunts what a woman must know to be a good wife and mother. She is early taught one of her primary tasks, to bake bread in the pottery oven (*tandur*), to grind wheat and corn, and to cook vegetable dishes. She learns to make and mend clothing, to embroider, to make felt, to spin, and to weave. She gossips with the other women at the well, the canal, the river, and around the fire. She is soon ready for marriage and motherhood.

FILM LINK

Lorry driver, idol of many young boys in Aq Kupruk.

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*Girls often continue to enjoy the garden swing until late in life. The champion swinger in 1972 when the film crew was in Aq Kupruk, was a gray-haired grandmother of about 60.

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Role Assimilation: Boys

Boys are generally circumcised by their seventh year, the operation being performed by local or itinerant barbers. Accompanying festivities often include music and dancing, and such sporting events as *buzkashi*, wrestling, chess, and shooting competitions. The father and male relatives give prizes to the winners, usually money or expensive turban cloths. The extent of the festivities and the nature of the prizes depends of course on the wealth of the individual family.

After circumcision, the boys are expected to behave as adult males, and are permitted to wear a turban cloth over their distinctive turban caps. They assist their fathers in the fields and in other chores the society assigns to males. Like Naim and Jabar, they learn by watching and doing: plowing, planting, reaping, winnowing, brickmaking, fishing, hunting, mudding roofs—the full gamut of male activity. They are no longer allowed to play with females of their own age.

On bazaar days in Aq Kupruk, boys whose fathers or uncles own shops perform myriad tasks: they clean the shops and tend to customers while their fathers go to the mosque to pray. Sons of artisans, such as blacksmiths and tinsmiths, also serve as apprentices. Others sell hot bread (*nan*) in the bazaar to supplement the family income, an activity especially important to widows and the poorer families.

Adolescence

In most respects, the children of Aq Kupruk have no adolescence. In addition to the obvious physical changes, adolescence (in the Western sense) can be defined as a time of learning how to be *away* from the family, preparing the individual for an adult world. In the West, an adolescent prepares to enter a flexible, fluctuating, multi-institutionalized society. In Aq Kupruk a young person remains in a generalized, uni-institutional society where almost all men are first and foremost farmers, herders, or a combination of the two, and all women are housewives, helpmates, and mothers.

Socialization patterns within rural Afghan families are flavored by a three-generational aspect. Grandparents,* aunts, and uncles are relied upon to teach the children the spiritual aspects of the society. Since most people in Aq Kupruk are nonliterate, the elders represent the past and are walking "encyclopedias." They distill the knowledge of the ages as a collective wisdom that is passed on orally in folk traditions, origin myths (to establish the identity of the group) and in tales of heroes who symbolize both the virtues of the group and the different historic periods. The parents represent the present, the currently functioning economic, political, social, and biological units. The children, recipients of the elders' wisdom and their parents' practical expertise, represent the future. They are the symbols of both familial and cultural continuity

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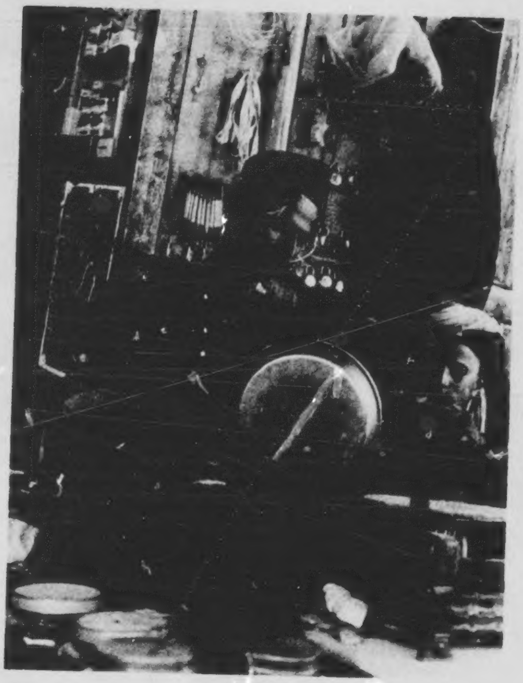
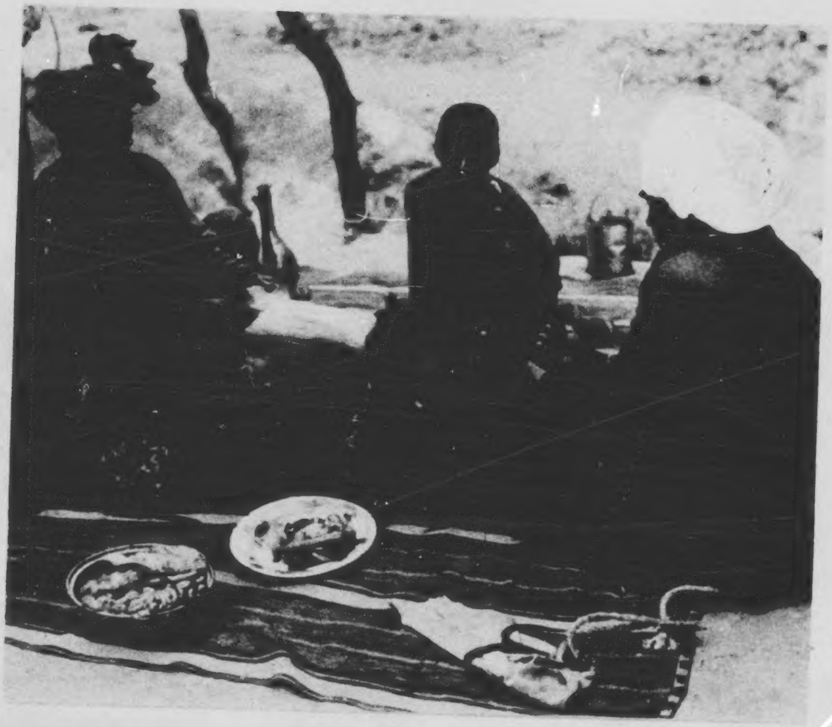
*The grandparent-grandchild relationship becomes important early and lasts as long as the grandparents live. The closeness of the relationship is emphasized by the terms of endearment used by the grandchild and grandparent, sometimes the same term, *baba* for both grandfather and grandson.





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FILM LINK

Childhood ends abruptly as did weaning from the mother's breast, but both males and females remain oriented to the nuclear family. In the traditional society, the girls will prepare themselves for marriage and thereafter for accommodating to a new family while retaining important links to siblings. The rest of a young man's life will be spent in competition with other males for mates, for land and water, for more property and power. The struggle for the most part will take place in his home town. For the majority of young men in Aq Kupruk now and in the immediate future, the struggle to wrest the means of survival from their environment will absorb them, as it has from childhood, into old age.

FILM LINK

Most rural Afghan boys will follow in their father's paths. If the family owns land, they will learn early, like Naim and Jabar, how to cut wheat, to gather brush, and to plow a field. They will progress, as they increase in age and experience, from gathering dried dung for fuel to tending the livestock, perhaps even gaining the right to ride the famly's prized horse. Shopkeepers' sons learn the local system of weights and measures before the family even considers whether or not to send them to school. And almost everyone participates at some time in making mud bricks or resealing the mud roofs which are cracked by the seasonal alternation of heavy snow and dry, parching heat.

Formal Education

About 20 per cent of the eligible children in Aq Kupruk and the vicinity are in school,* most of them males who will not complete the six-year course of study that is available locally. A few, like Jabar, will seek an education beyond the small mud-walled schoolroom near the Balkh River, for Afghan fathers are as ambitious for their sons as their means allow. "Study well, my son, and I'll buy you some boots," Jabar's father says to his younger son. Some have begun to recognize that sending their sons to school may set them on the course to a government or development project job carrying with it relative wealth and power.

According to local estimates about 15 per cent of the adult males in Aq Kupruk can read and write. This is probably an overestimate, although the figure may be higher than the usual 5-10 per cent calculated for the nation, owing to the bazaar and the necessity for keeping commercial records. Only one adult woman is literate, and the other women call her "Bibi Mullah" because, as they put it, she can give the "Call to Prayer" and recite the Koran better than most mullahs in the village.

Mosque School (Madrassa)

The mosque school in Aq Kupruk has an impact far beyond its small numbers. Its 20 students (*talib*) study the Koran in Arabic, the Sayings of the Prophet Mohammad (Hadith), and the Hanafi

Film Dialogue

Last year was very bad, there was hunger.

We had some things and sold them.

One day I said to my son, "Do not stay with me . . . . .

Go back to Mazar to school.

There the Government feeds you.

What can you gain by staying with me?"

Jabar's father

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*This figure fits in with the official national average: about 20 per cent of eligible boys are in grades 1-6; 5 per cent of eligibles in grades 7-9; 2 per cent, grades 10-12. The Kabul average is much higher than the rest of the country: about 60 per cent of eligibles attend classes 1-12.

Shaira, the Sunni Code of Islam which is dominant in Afghanistan. The Madrassa had 300 pupils when it was founded 70 years ago by Maulwi Rahmatullah, and Aq Kupruk, according to many elders, was a thriving town with one-third more population than today. Many people still prefer that their sons attend the mosque school rather than secular government schools, because a madrassa-trained mullah in the family is a mark of distinction.

Of those who finish the course of study—the length of time varies with the individual's ability—only a few will remain in Aq Kupruk. The top scholars will attend one of the larger madrassa at Mazar-i-Sharif, sitting at the feet of learned *maulwi* and *maulana*. Some may even go to the College of Theology at Kabul University, or end up as *qazi*, government judges with both religious and secular training.

During slack periods of the agricultural cycle, separate classes for small boys and girls are held in the madrassa, where they are taught the fundamentals of Islam by both the *maulwi* and the *talib*. Promising young boys are tapped as future religious scholars.

The Government Schools

Although the madrassa maintains its prestige in conservatively Muslim Aq Kupruk, the government school has been growing in influence. Growth has been slow, however, and not without resistance, especially to the girls' school for grades one to three, established in 1968. The boys' school, begun in 1963, offers grades one to six.

Two types of primary schools currently exist in Afghanistan: so-called village schools (grades one to three), and regular six-grade primary schools, located mainly in the towns and larger villages. Village schools usually have one teacher, who has, at maximum, a tenth-grade education. The basic primary school (like the boys' school in Aq Kupruk) has a principal, one teacher for grades one to three, and several special subject teachers for grades four to six. The curriculum for grades one to three includes reading and writing in the locally predominant language, Dari (Persian)*; physical education (mainly volleyball); and religious studies (taught by *maulwi* from the madrassa). For grades four through six the curriculum includes grammar, composition, and literature in Dari Persian; Pashto as a second language; social studies (history, geography, civics); math-science-health; practical works; physical education; and religious studies.

Schools in Afghanistan accommodate their schedules to the climate and the agricultural cycle: in cold areas the school session extends from about March 5 to November 25 with a long winter vacation; in warm areas sessions extend from about September 5 to May 25 with the long vacation falling during summer months. In Aq Kupruk schools follow the latter pattern, so that youths are free to work with their families during the peak agricultural season.

Film Dialogue

No 7th grade students can be admitted . . . this year. But we plan to extend your village school . . . so that boys your age can study there.

Director of Education,
Mazar-i-Sharif

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*The official languages in Afghanistan are Pashto, called the national language in the Constitution, and Dari (Persian).

Typically, the government supplies wood to heat the schools. In virtually treeless areas like Aq Kupruk, it must be transported over considerable distance, in this case via Mazar-i-Sharif and Sholgara. Traditionally, the teachers divided the wood among themselves, and families who could afford it sent wood to the schools daily with their sons and daughters. Students bringing wood were permitted to sit nearest the stove.

FILM LINK

In 1972, the school principal in Aq Kupruk was a Pushtun from eastern Afghanistan; he had attended the Higher Teachers College (equivalent in the United States to junior college status) in Jalalabad, and was not happy with his appointment to the "provinces." He administered both the boys' and girls' schools and taught the alphabet and writing in the girls' school. The four teachers in the boys' school, all Saadat from Aq Kupruk, had attended the Teacher Training Institute at Mazar-i-Sharif and graduated with high school (twelfth grade) diplomas and teacher certificates. The one teacher in the girls' school, a 23-year-old local Sayyid, had finished the ninth class at the Amir Sher Ali Khan High School in Mazar-i-Sharif. Then, at the request of the principal in Aq Kupruk, he had been sent home to teach, in a rather desultory fashion, all the subjects in the girls' school.

The boys' school, two rooms for 110 students, sits on the south bank of the Balkh; the one-room girls' school with 20 students is on the opposite bank. Ethnolinguistic representation at the school is uneven: no Uzbak boys attend and only one Tajik girl, the daughter of a shopkeeper in Aq Kupruk. Most of the students are daughters of government officials who are stationed in Aq Kupruk, and a few Uzbak girls from the eastern section of Aq Kupruk attend classes from time to time. The percentage of eligible girls attending schools is no more than one per cent. And even for those who attend for three years, their newly acquired literacy tends to atrophy rapidly because of the almost total lack of reading material in rural Afghan homes.

Both boys and girls are often deterred from attending school by the expensive clothing requirements. Boys must wear Western-style clothes, including shoes. Girls in Aq Kupruk are enjoined to wear costly white scarfs instead of the cheaper and more popular red-printed shawls.

Education for What?

Textbooks and teachers, indeed the whole formal educational system, present problems of quantity, quality, and distribution. The teachers supply all the answers, and questioning is discouraged or simply ignored. Learning by rote may discourage original, independent thinking, but it is the key to praise and promotion in most Afghan schools. Zero-sum psychology is at its zenith here: if someone gains, someone must lose, and no student wants to gain at the expense of another, possibly a kinsman. (This holds true for

Film Dialogue

How old are you? Give me your identity card.
What's your father? Does he own land?

No, sir, he runs a shop.

You've an older brother?

Yes, sir.

What's his job? Doesn't he work on the land?

We've nothing to plant.

Director of Education
and Naim

all non-material aspects of the society, such as prestige and honor, but *not* in the economic sphere.)

Teachers are undertrained, underpaid, and underworked. Most must work on the off-educational season to make ends meet. One teacher, a Sayyid tribesman from the town, tutored backward or very promising students during the summer, and also opened a carpenter's shop in 1972.* He also has a reputation as a calligrapher and a poet. Every school day, he taught from 8 A.M. to noon, then worked in his carpentry shop from one to five in the afternoon. Although tubercular and dying, the teacher took a great interest in his students both in and out of school and taught several how to fish with a drawstring throw-net, weighted with lead pellets.**

Secular schools in Aq Kupruk, as elsewhere, have helped create close personal bonds, which have not existed in the past, outside the nuclear family. Classmates—like Naim and Jabar—often develop lifelong friendships. The rural primary schools send a certain number of boys to city schools each year; generally these are ambitious youths who will later find little to attract them back to the rural areas.

The traditional agricultural-based economy in the villages and countryside is still scarcely influenced by changes taking place in urban areas or in association with government development projects as in the Hilmand Valley. The towns and cities, however, must somehow absorb the growing literate population, with its newly raised expectations of jobs commensurate with its training and talent. A saturation point may be reached in the next generation, when a group of literate Afghans, who cannot get jobs in the major cities, will probably be forced to return to assist in provincial and rural development. At present, only a relative few Afghans outside Kabul have an opportunity to fulfill expectations generated by the schools and the acquisition of literacy; many others, half-literate but equally hopeful, fall by the wayside, often embittered.

What will become of Naim and Jabar, the two friends split apart by these social changes? Much actually depends on what becomes of Jabar. If his life away at school leads to work in the capital, and the lure of the city is strong, the friendship between the two will probably go the way of friendships in any society where young people drift away from home. The logistics of travel in Afghanistan are such that Jabar would probably only return to his village on rare occasions. Naim, having had his hopes for higher education dashed, will probably remain close to his work in his family shop and in the fields.

Film Dialogue

I've been close to tears since I heard the news . . . .

He's really crying.
Don't cry . . . don't be sad, wipe your eyes with this.

I have a handkerchief.
When I heard your news, tears choked me . . . .
Now that you're going, what'll I do here alone?

Naim and Jabar,
after Naim is recommended
for the military academy

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*As a result of a local feud in the early 1960s, the teacher's family had to move to Aibak, capital of Samangan Province. After leaving Aq Kupruk, he attended the teacher training Institute in Mazar-i-Sharif. His first assignment was in Zari in 1968, but, at his own request he was transferred to Aq Kupruk in 1971. The feud followed the family to Aibak, and the teacher had to make a quick trip there in mid-summer 1972 because one of his five younger brothers had been killed and another wounded. A meeting of the village council *(majlis)* temporarily halted the feud on the payment of blood money to the teacher's family.

**Most of the fish are *shir-mahi,* small, tasty fish eaten whole after being degutted, marinated overnight with pepper, salt, and garlic, and fried in vegetable oil or animal fat.

The question "education for what?" remains. The hope of the fathers, that education will bring wealth or "good jobs," is still remote except for the exceptionally lucky or the exceptionally gifted. Naim has had only a tantalizing peep into a world of sophistication, opportunity, and affluence. His failure to pass the military school exam ended his dream that he might live such a life.

Naim with scythe.

AFGHANISTAN

3

Rural Economy

WHEAT CYCLE

MAN ALMOST LIVES BY BREAD ALONE

by LOUIS DUPREE

For millennia the people of Aq Kupruk have depended on the annual wheat cycle for their daily bread, literally the staff of life in rural Afghanistan. Archaeological evidence from caves near Aq Kupruk indicates that the people of the valley were herding domesticated sheep and goats as early as the West and Central Asian Neolithic, about 11,000 years ago. If subsequent radiocarbon dates approximate the earlier tests, the northern foothills of the Hindu Kush mountains in Afghanistan must be considered in the zone of the early domestication of animals, and possibly plants as well.

Control of food supply led ultimately to surpluses which permitted the rise of full-time specialists, the growth of urban centers, civilization and, ultimately, nuclearization. Pastoral nomadism may also have developed when dissidents among the incipient agriculturalists broke away because they could not adjust to settled life. In a compromise between the preceding hunting-gathering cultures and sedentary agriculture, they turned to pastoral nomadism.

The farmers of Aq Kupruk depend exclusively on unirrigated land for grain, but many types of crops are grown in the irrigated gardens along the Balkh River that flows through the town. Aq Kupruk is yet to be affected by the possible advantages of the Green Revolution. There is negligible use of chemical fertilizers, and farmers are planting the same seed varieties they have used for generations. Seventy per cent of the adult males in Aq Kupruk own land. The other 30 per cent work as tenant farmers. A few simply work as laborers in the fields, receiving their meals—several pieces of flat bread (*nan*) and possibly tea—and about 20-30 afghanis a day (in summer 1972 afs.90 = US$1).

Film Dialogue

The rhythm of life in north Afghanistan revolves around the annual wheat cycle; reaping, threshing, winnowing, milling, bread-baking, then ploughing and planting. A particularly important time is at the end of winnowing when land owners share grain with the poor.

Narrator

Growing Grains: Upland Agriculture in Aq Kupruk

Agricultural labor is concentrated in the warm, summer months, including the annual cleaning and repair of the canal that irrigates low-lying fields with water from the Balkh River and also provides a source of power for the stone mill wheels that process the annual harvest.

Plowing is done with a pair of oxen and a wooden frame plow with a removable flanged iron plowshare. Planting is begun in mid-April, and harvests begin some three months later, usually in mid-July, when at least part of each farming family, landowning and tenant, moves to a *yilaq* (summer quarters) in the high fields and remains there, living in a portable yurt until the harvesting, threshing, and winnowing have been completed. Each *yilaq* area has its own threshing and winnowing floor, hardened after years of use.

An area plowed by one man usually takes four or five men to cut. Reaping is done with small, curved hand sickles, much more efficient for hillside reaping than large, unwieldy scythes. Reaping is a social as well as an economic exercise; the men and boys sing, play flutes and other musical instruments, and often engage in horseplay. If the extended family does not have enough adults in the *yilaq* to do the job, landless laborers are hired from Aq Kupruk and surrounding villages. This is one reason why many children, especially sons, are desirable in landowning families.

Teams of up to six oxen thresh the wheat, their hooves separating the grain from the chaff as they walk round and round. The ubiquitous summer winds make winnowing easy. Using locally made wooden winnowing forks or imported steel pitchforks, the farmers toss the mixed grain and chaff into the air. The winds blow the lighter chaff away from the heavier grain. In the late summer, the winnowing process seen from a mountain top looks as though the entire valley is dotted with artillery duels.

In October, the fields are again plowed and the harrow is used to compact the soil. November, December, January, and February are months of snow and rest. While the soils are renewing themselves for the next season, the people repair their tools, and revive old feuds as well as other more pacific assertions of their group's identity in folktales and songs. In late February or early March, the agricultural cycle begins again.

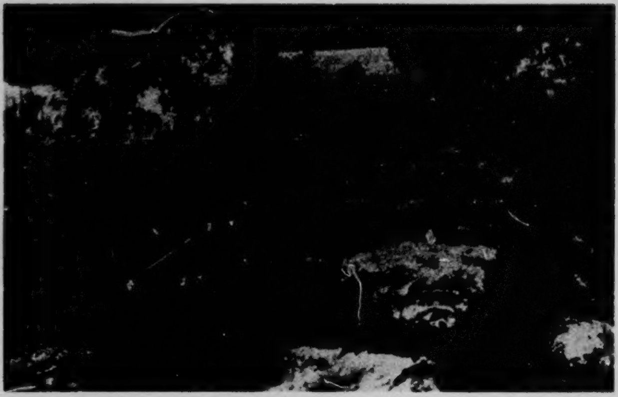
FILM
LINK

Film Dialogue

To grind wheat into flour, village mills must use water power. Each year the small canal which takes water from the river must be dammed and dredged. During this time mills are rebuilt and fields prepared for irrigation.

Narrator

Irrigation canal next to river



Aq Kupruk Gardens: Irrigation Agriculture

Many types of crops are grown in the irrigated gardens (*abi*) which line the Balkh River as it flows through the town. While Aq Kupruk is yet to be affected by the possible advantages of the Green Revolution, thick loess soils blanket much of northern and central Afghanistan, and annually more of this rich aeolian sediment pours down from Russian Central Asia. The loess blows down during the spring and summer, and sometimes hangs in the air for days, blocking the sun, settling on the skin, and making the teeth gritty. Still, it helps account for the relative agricultural wealth of the region and neighboring villages when compared to other areas of Afghanistan.

FILM
LINK

Melons are grown on a small scale in the irrigated gardens as well as on otherwise fallow upland fields. Most gardens, however, are planted predominantly in corn, turnips, carrots, millet, lentils, chick peas, onions (also collected wild), potatoes, cucumbers, tomatoes, eggplant, sesame, linseed, spinach, corriander, cumin seed, and squash. All these are ready by November, some earlier than others. Everything which can be is dried and preserved for use in winter. Carrots, turnips, tomatoes, and mutton all go into a jerky-like preparation called *landi*, and *landi* pilau is a favorite winter dish. The gardens also harbor many fruit and nut-bearing trees—plum, apricot, walnut, mulberry, fig, peach, almond—as well as plane trees, poplars, willows, and oaks.

In 1965 one farmer began to grow cotton on 15 *jerib* of *abi* garden land, to sell in Mazar-i-Sharif. To grow cotton successfully, however, large-scale irrigation is necessary, and the only place in the region where intensive cotton cultivation has been successful begins north of Pul-i-Baraq, especially in the flat valley around Sholgara. The Aq Kupruk farmer's attempt proved unprofitable. When the 1970-71 drought began, he switched to rice,* which he still grows, the only farmer in Aq Kupruk to do so. A number of families in Aq Kupruk still grow some cotton in their gardens, but almost exclusively for personal use.

*Successful rice cultivation also requires sizable amounts of irrigation water, and has the additional disadvantage that malarial mosquitoes breed prolifically in the fields.

Land Tenure and the Rural Economy

Average individual land holding in Aq Kupruk is about 10 *jerib*.* The *jerib*, a word probably of Arabic origin, is a measurement used by the government and foreigners. The local people refer to land by the number of *seer*** of wheat produced on an individual plot. In a good year, *lalmi* wheat yields on an average of 10 to 12 *seer* to each one planted; in poorer years, six or eight to one. During the drought year of 1970-71, the people reported some yields as low as one to one, complete failure, but by and large Aq Kupruk lay outside the zone of major drought. Many in Aq Kupruk did go into debt in 1972 because they had to borrow seed or money to buy seed from the three larger landowners,*** who own 56, 52, and 50 *jerib* of *lalmi* respectively; each of the three also owns about two *jerib* of *abi* garden. There are no really wealthy landowners in Aq Kupruk and no absentee landlords.

Loans are of three basic types, involving cash, seeds or livestock, and a contract system called *gerau*. When cash, seeds or livestock are involved, the lender may not expect to be repaid (unless the borrower leaves the region), but the lender does expect support in any local disputes or elections. If the lender expects repayment, the amount is agreed upon at the time of the loan; a man borrowing afs. 1,000 may be required to repay afs. 1,400 after one year. If he cannot pay the full amount, he must pay a "service charge"—often as much as 40 per cent of the loaned amount—which technically is not interest, traditional Islam in theory prohibiting usury.

There are occasional variations on the basic lending arrangements. Sometimes a farmer must borrow cash in the fall, and agrees to sell the lender wheat (or another product) at a rate much lower than the going price after harvest. For example, a farmer borrows afs. 1,000, and agrees to sell the lender afs. 1,000 worth of wheat at afs. 20 per *seer*, when the going rate may reach afs. 50 or more the following summer. Real interest in such instances is astronomical.

Seed loans after the 1960-71 drought involved the repayment of half the reaped crop. Therefore, if the reaped crop ratio was 12 to one (as happened in some cases), the seed lender realized a six to one return on his investment, hardly a bad "non-interest" arrangement in any culture.

The nomads (*maldar*) who pass through Aq Kupruk twice annually often have sizable amounts of ready cash to lend farmers who live along their routes of migration.**** Violent fights sometimes break out when the *maldar* try to collect. The ready cash available in the Aq Kupruk bazaar, however, has made it unnecessary for any local farmers to borrow from the *maldar*.

Under the *gerau* system, a man accepts money up to the total value of his fields. Each year, until the full debt is paid, he must give one-half the yield to the lender. For example: a man owns ten

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*One *jerib* equals .477 acre.

**The *seer* varies from region to region in Afghanistan: in Kabul it equals seven kilos, in Mazar-i-Sharif and Aq Kupruk, 14 kilos.

***In speaking of the difficulties endured during the drought years, the women of Aq Kupruk use the phrase "we ate our cradles," meaning they had to sell precious belongings in order to survive. "Cradle" signifies all belongings for it is a woman's most prized possession.

****See "Afghan Nomads, the *Maldar*," film and film essay.

jerib of *lalmi*, and needs cash for his son's wedding. He borrows afs. 50,000 from a local bazaar merchant, who is also one of the wealthier farmers. The borrower must give the merchant the production of five *jerib* of his land until the total afs. 50,000 have been repaid in cash. Since the borrower will need most of the produce from the other five *jerib* for his family's home consumption, he will have little surplus to sell, so it may be years before he can pay off the debt. If he dies before the debt is paid, his heirs inherit the debt as well as the land.

Although the *gerau* system (like the tenancy system described below) may seem unduly oppressive at first glance, safety factors do exist. The borrower (or tenant) usually claims a very low yield on his crops, and the lender (or landlord) seldom gets his full legal share. The annual charade is enjoyed by all concerned, and the man who can most outrageously outfox his lender or landlord is admired by his neighbors and adversaries alike.

Where tenants are concerned, the classic "fiver" system exists with local variations. Theoretically, the landlord and tenant get one-fifth of the crop for each of five basic elements furnished: land, water, seed, draft animals, labor. The owner supplies no water to the *lalmi* (only Allah can do that), and if he supplies three (land, seed, draft animals) of the remaining four, he and his tenant share the crop 50-50. If the tenant is able to furnish three (seed, animals, labor) of the four, he gets between three-fifths and four-fifths of the yield, depending on the annual contract he can extract from the landowner.

Traditionally, sons inherit full shares in land and money from the father; daughters receive half shares.* The woman's portion of the inheritance is very important, however, and she brings this potential wealth with her as part of her dowry. The eldest (or most able) son may receive the entire farming land intact to prevent continual fragmentation into smaller and smaller parcels. A 15-*jerib* farm could be cut infinitesimally, and uneconomically, in several generations. Younger sons now often receive cash settlements, but after this many actually stay on and help work the land for approximately a tenant's share. Alternately, all brothers may accept their inherited shares, but live together in the same compound and cooperate throughout the year. This is common practice, particularly if their mother is of strong character.

Food and Diet in Aq Kupruk

The diet of the people of Aq Kupruk largely reflects seasonal, local resources. The round, slightly leavened, Uzbak-type bread (*nan*) forms the staple, and any hard-working farmer can eat three or four loaves at a sitting. The average per capita consumption (according to local estimates) is about one pound, half a kilo of flour per day.** People never throw bread away; the final morsel is sometimes touched to the lips, the eyes, and the forehead, possibly a vestige of a pre-Islamic ritual related to bread as the staff of life.

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*Competition among siblings for property is discussed in "Naim and Jabar," film and film essay.

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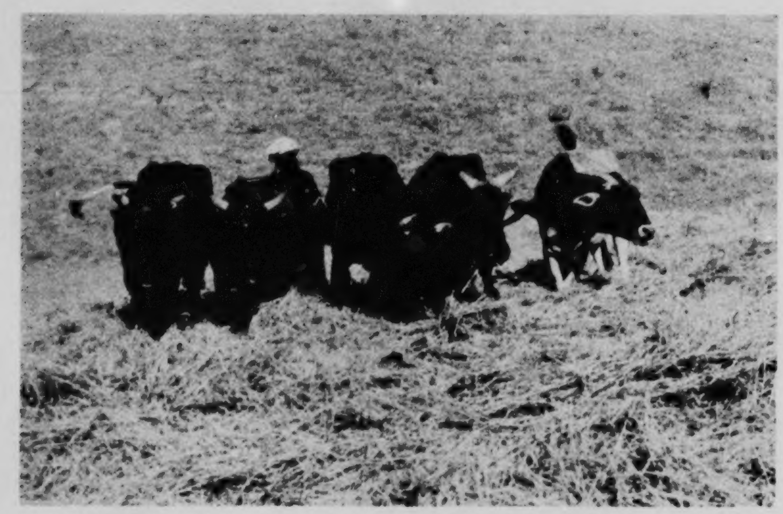
**This may be a slight overestimate. Research by United Nations nutritionists indicate that a family of five (mother, father, three children) in a village south of Mazar-i-Sharif (but northeast of Aq Kupruk) required one-quarter *seer* a day per person — or about .55 pounds.



WHEAT CYCLE: THE AGRICULTURAL PROCESS

The people of Aq Kupruk depend on the annual wheat cycle for their daily bread. It is literally the staff of life in rural Afghanistan. Grain is planted exclusively on unirrigated hillside land (*lalmi*) surrounding the town. Wheat predominates at higher elevations; barley is usually planted first on the lower field: both types of seeds are broadcast by hand. The sequence of work, as partially depicted in the film, has changed little for thousands of years.

Plowing and Planting. The hillsides are prepared in late March and early April and broken with a single blade plow and a team of oxen. Planting begins in mid-April. Shortly after the seeds are broadcast, farmers begin to break up the clods and smooth over the fields with a simple rectangular harrow. This also is drawn by two oxen with a man standing on the harrow. On very steep hillsides, men do the task themselves with hoes and shovels. A green thorny, oily plant (*busa*) grows on the hillsides among the stands of wheat and helps prevent erosion of the loess. The *busa* are readily visible in the golden ripened *lalmi* fields. These plants are not cut when the field is reaped, but are taken from the fallow fields as fuel. The following year the plants once again grow along with the planted wheat.

Reaping and Threshing. Reaping is done with small, curved hand sickles which are more efficient for hillside work than large scythes. Reaping is a social as well as an economic exercise; the men and boys sing, play flutes and other musical instruments and often engage in horseplay. The work as it progresses is a combination of play, folk art, and labor.

The reaped wheat is stacked high near a hardened, level threshing floor. The stacks are guarded at night to prevent predators and rodents from eating the grain and to defend against possible wheat rustlers from nearby villages or *maldar* camps. Guards often build temporary huts around the wheat from branches and interlaced twigs. Teams of up to six oxen thresh the wheat, their hooves separating the grain from the chaff as they walk in circles.

Winnowing. The ubiquitous summer winds make winnowing easy. Using locally-made wooden winnowing forks or imported steel pitchforks, the farmers toss the mixed grain and chaff into the air. The winds blow the lighter chaff away from the heavier grain.

The winnowing completed, and the wheat and chaff in separate piles, the business of dividing shares commences. Donkeys are brought up to remove the respective shares of those who labored. The final winnowing with round hand sieves takes place at this time. Landless labors and poorer villagers come to the winnowing site and a certain percentage of the grain is given them as charity. Often the women and small girls come to collect family shares for their husbands and brothers who are working elsewhere as hired labor.

After the fields have been cut, livestock graze over the stubble, depositing manure which, when plowed under and saturated by snow and rain, does much to replace the nitrogen taken from the soil in cultivating wheat. Other natural fertilizers are added to the fields by utilizing the rich earth produced by the archaeological mounds dotting Afghanistan.

The farmers retain some seeds for the spring planting, storing them in clay-lined pits or large pots to prevent destruction by rodents and chickens. A part of the stored seed is also given as charity before the spring planting commences.

Milling. Before milling, the grain is washed in the *jui* to remove dust and small stones. The bulk of the seed is taken to one of the five privately owned mills on either side of the river for grinding into flour. Basically, the water mills can be described as "Norse-type" mills. Their vertical shafts are rotated by water funneled down a chute to a number of scooped paddles or blades. The power generated may reach 10-15 horsepower — or about 170 revolutions per minute. The shaft can be lifted out of the water for repairs, or stored when the milling operations cease.

After drying, the grain is poured into the top feeder, which controls the amount falling into the hopper and onto the millstones. The upper stone, attached to the shaft, rotates; the lower stone remains stationary.

In October, the natural fertilizers having been spread by both livestock (manure) and man (collected dung and mound debris), the fall plowing takes place, and the harrow is used to compact the soil. Winter snow and rains will break down the manure into its chemical components. November, December, January, and February are months of snow and rest. While the soils are renewing themselves for the next season, the people repair their tools. In late February or early March the cycle begins again.

Bread is baked daily by the women in an hemispherical pottery oven (*tandur*), usually built into a mud platform in a covered kitchen area outside the main house.* Brush collected from the hillsides and dung are used as fuel. Wearing an elbow-length protective glove, the baker slaps the kneaded, flattened dough against the inner wall of the *tandur*. In less than 15 minutes the day's supply of bread is baked and ready for home consumption or sale in the market. Selling bread in the bazaar is a major source of income for a few families and many supplement their incomes in this way.

A typical breakfast consists (year-round) of fresh or yesterday's *nan* dunked in green (the favorite) or black tea, one of the several food imports to Aq Kupruk. Sugar is a luxury few can afford, but guests are served liberal amounts whether they like it or not. The people also consume several imported sugar substitutes with tea, such as *gur* (unrefined molasses from Baghlan sugarcane), *nokl-badam* and *nokl-nakhod* (sugar-coated almonds and chick peas), and hard candies from Mazar-i-Sharif and Kabul. Other imports include rice (mainly from the Kunduz and Tashkurghan areas), grapes in late summer and early fall from Sangcharak to the west and Mazar-i-Sharif to the north, and crushed rock salt mined in the Hazarajat.

Rice dishes are popular but few can afford them daily. Most of the varied pilaus are served with meat (goat, mutton, camel, chicken, or partridge) buried in the center of the pile of rice. Meat is not a luxury but neither is it commonplace; very old animals are killed for their meat and occasionally lambs and kids are killed if the herds are large. In general, people protect the active adult animal population for breeding and dairy products. Side dishes of vegetables, with or without meat but often with a tomato base, supplement the pilau and give added body and flavor.

All foods are cooked in oils and fats, and many types are utilized and highly prized. Oils left in pots after cooking or dishes after serving are eagerly sopped up with *nan*. The main fats used in Aq Kupruk are *roghon-i-zard* or *roghon-i-hindu* (a clarified butter, also called *ghee*, a Hindi term which many Afghans believe to be English) and *roghon-i-dumbah*, a lard rendered from the tail of the fat-tailed sheep.** They also use oils extracted from melon seed, sesame, linseed, sunflower, and cottonseed.

The people eat hot soups (*shorwa*), usually a meat stock and tomato-base, especially as lunches and dinners in winter. If the soup is cooked with meat, it is removed and eaten as a side dish. *Nan* is broken into large hunks and dropped into the soup to soak up the liquid. Diners pick out the soaked bread with the fingers of the right hand. (Afghans never eat with the left hand, which is considered unclean because of its association with elimination of body wastes. What happens psychologically to a genetically left-handed child forced to eat with his right hand remains to be studied.)

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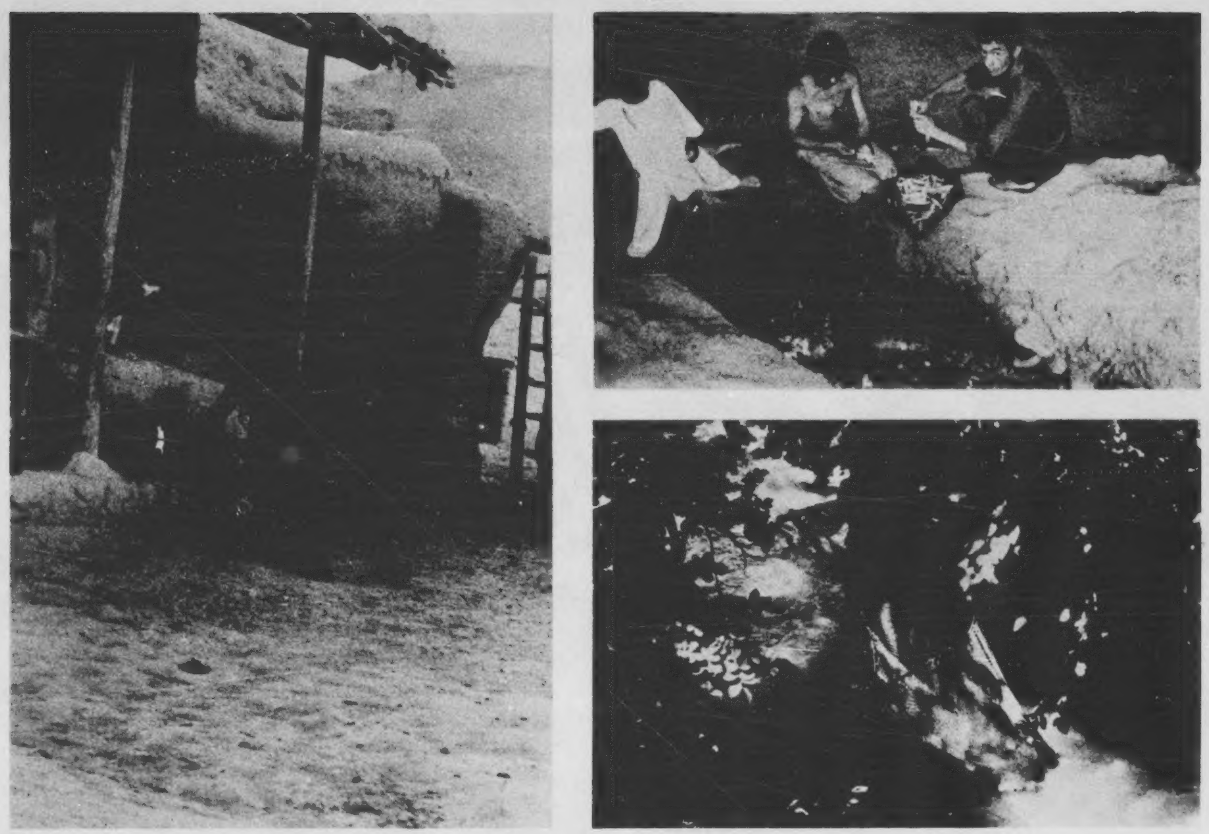
*In other areas of Afghanistan, the *tandur* is often sunk into the ground or floor.

**In the larger urban centers like Kabul, imported vegetable oils from Pakistan, Iran, India, and Western Europe have been gaining popularity. Locally manufactured oils (mainly cottonseed) from factories in the Kunduz, Lashkar Gah, or Bost (capital of Hilmand Province) increase production annually. Ningrahar Valley Project's state farm near Jalalabad began to produce olive oil in 1974.



Left: A woman stokes a fire in the pottery over (*tandur*) in which she will later make bread.

Right: The boys are preparing milk fish (*shirmahi*) that they have caught with a net (below) in the irrigation canal.

The word for the tablecloth off which the family eats its meals is the same as one of the terms for the nuclear family: *dastakan*. Most foods are eaten by the nuclear family from a communal dish, except when guests are present; then the men and guests eat first. The women and children get what is left, always more than sufficient, for it is a shame to underserve a guest, who may belch heartily to indicate his enjoyment. The people of Aq Kupruk seldom eat *kabab*, meat cubes or ground meat on skewers and cooked over a charcoal brazier, although various *kabab* are popular elsewhere in Afghanistan.

Most dairy products are consumed in spring (the lambing season), and other products are prepared for later consumption. Fresh and boiled milk from cows and goats, buttermilk, cheese, yoghurt, cream skimmed from boiled milk, dried curds, and curds boiled in *roghon-i-dumbah* are among the dairy products prepared. A favorite summer dish is a large bowl of buttermilk with sliced cucumbers, eaten communally with a wooden spoon.

The cuisine of Aq Kupruk represents a mixture of Iranian Plateau and Central Asian dishes. Pasta* dishes, however, also have widespread distribution, and converting wheat flour to pasta is one way of effectively and safely storing food for long periods of

*Scholars still argue over the origin of the pasta complex: did it originate in China or Italy, or somewhere in between? The spread of the pasta complex may have occurred during the heyday of the Silk Route trade between Ancient Cathay and the Classical Mediterranean world, or from about the first to the fifth centuries, A.D. The caravaneers possibly discovered the pasta was easier to take on long journeys than flour.

time. Several pasta dishes are common in Aq Kupruk: *ash*, a minestrone-type noodle and vegetable soup, with a dollop of yoghurt (drained or undrained); *ashak*, a ravioli-like dish with filling of cheese, meat, or leek and eaten with meat and vegetable sauces topped with *chakah* (drained yoghurt).

The people literally eat crow, in addition to other hunted and netted birds such as pigeons, doves, and partridges. In some areas, sparrows are consumed after being defeathered, gutted, and cooked in *roghon*; they are eaten whole, including their delicate, crunchy skulls. All animals must have their throats cut while alive to insure that the meat is fresh. The custom is called *halal*. Animals killed instantly with shotgun blasts are considered unclean (*haram*), but hunters pounce on the animals and birds and cut their throats immediately, *before* they check to see if the creature is actually alive.

Small fish, usually milk fish (*shir mahi*), are netted in the river and canal by throwing a weighted, circular net or pulling a rectangular seine (two boys hold the net, one drives the fish inside). The cleaned fish are rubbed with salt and spices, left overnight, then fried in oil.

People in Aq Kupruk, like most Afghans and other Muslims, consider specific foods to be either "hot" or "cold."* Possibly the concept came in with Islam, for early Arab Muslim sources discuss these concepts. In winter, all people should eat hot foods; in summer, cool. When ill, one should eat hot foods if chilled, cool foods if one has a fever. The interplay of hot and cool runs throughout life, and it is considered important to eat the proper foods that can maintain a balance.

Hot foods in Aq Kupruk include: bread, pasta, billygoat meat, ram meat, young camel, chickens, long grain rice, onions (both wild and cultivated), peppers, garlic, spinach, sheep's milk, *roghon* from "hot" animals, sesame oil, sugar, black tea, melons, raisins, dried fruits and nuts. Cool foods include: beef, nannygoat meat, old camel, cow's milk, goat's milk, short grain rice, potatoes, carrots, tomatoes, squashes, cucumbers, *roghon* of cold animals, green tea, dairy products (yoghurt, curds, buttermilk, cheeses), river water, watermelons. Many taboos exist concerning the simultaneous consumption of hot and cold foods. Black tea, for example, should never be taken directly after eating watermelon, or illness will result.

Modern Agriculture in Afghanistan

Afghanistan's total land area is about 63 million hectares** or 245,000 square miles, of which only about 12 per cent (7.8 million hectares) is cultivated because of inadequate water control or actual water shortages. Irrigated land (*abi*) consists of about 5.3 million hectares, with only 2.0 million hectares being farmed annually. The dry farmland (*lalmi*), on which highland wheat and barley grow, consists of only 1.3 million hectares.***

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*People are also considered to be psychologically and temperamentally hot or cold. Women, in general, are thought to be hotter than men. At menopause, women begin to cool down. Children are considered hot, and consequently should be fed cold foods. Old people grow colder and colder as death approaches.

**One hectare equals 2.47 acres.

***Reliable statistics are still difficult to obtain in Afghanistan. Much conflicting data on Afghan agriculture exist, and will continue to plague the planners and the implementors until a functioning, accurate land revenue system comes into being. The statistics I quote are from *A Report of the U.S. Agricultural Review Team to Afghanistan: Agricultural Development in Afghanistan with Special Emphasis on Wheat, 1967*.

The key to successful crops is sufficient water; barring disastrous drought such as occurred in 1969-1971, Afghanistan's problem is not insufficient water but adequate control. Billions of acre-feet of water pour down the mountains every spring but most of it disappears into the deserts, or is siphoned off by the many badly coordinated irrigation intakes lining the main rivers and tributaries.

Large storage dams are not the answer, as shown by the failure in the Hilmand-Arghandab valleys and elsewhere, because of the rapid silting of their reservoirs. In addition, the silts are needed downstream for continued fertility. Work with ground water, using pumps and improved drainage systems, may help the problem, but coordinated projects are needed along the major river systems (Amu Darya, Hari Rud, Hilmand-Arghandab, Kabul River). Moreover, since all rivers get their water from the same source at approximately the same time, seasonal fluctuations occur almost simultaneously, and coordinated projects for proper water usage would be easy to plot. Most rivers have maximum flow in late spring and early summer and minimum in late summer and winter.

Currently, both open canal systems and *qanat* systems are used. Open ditch irrigation is easy in the Turkestan Plains and lower foothills because of its relatively shallow water table. *Qanat* are more common in the east, south, and southwest, but also occur in the north around Herat and near Baghlan and Nahrin. The *qanat* system consists basically of a series of tunnel-linked wells or shafts to intercept the water table and bring water to the surface for use in irrigation. Part-time specialists, such as the Andar Ghilzai Pushtun of eastern Afghanistan, dig and repair the wells and tunnels, using lighted candles or lanterns to line up the excavators as they tunnel toward the next well. Hard ceramic hoops are used to reinforce weak strata. The *qanat* system must be cleaned annually because of silt accumulations and tunnel collapse. Goatskin buckets attached to a windlass contraption haul the excavated dirt and accumulated silts to the surface.

Two types of dry-land wheat are grown in Afghanistan: the autumn *lalmi termai*, planted mainly south of the Hindu Kush, and the spring planted *lalmi bahrami*, the type grown in the Aq Kupruk area. In the parts of Afghanistan where irrigation is possible,wheat is planted in early autumn and takes nine months to ripen. The effect of the introduction in 1971 of Mexipak varieties (which ripen in about four and one-half months) in irrigated areas remains to be seen. The government needs to mount massive seed and fertilizer distribution campaigns and to establish an effective farm extension program in order to achieve some measure of success. Some farmers have actually increased amounts of fertilizer as water supply has decreased, which burns up the crop. To many Afghan farmers, a puny stand of wheat should grow better when more fertilizer is added. Few really understand the two types of fertilizer (potash and urea) necessary to make the new seeds thrive, and fewer realize the necessity for drainage facilities to flush out the fields.

A new Soviet-assisted chemical fertilizer plant in Mazar-i-Sharif should begin producing urea from natural gas in 1975, and by the time it reaches capacity production in 1978 the plant should produce 105,000 tons of urea annually. But technology alone is insufficient, sometimes dangerous. The new plant could be as productive of problems as it is of fertilizer if others do not attend to providing equitable distribution, information on the efficient use of the fertilizers, and credit facilities to farmers such as those in Aq Kupruk.

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Man and nature live in a reasonably well-adjusted symbiosis at Aq Kupruk. When nature fails, man suffers; when man overextends, either in growth of population or technology, he introduces unknown variables and often, nature suffers. On balance, life at Aq Kupruk is good.

AFGHAN WOMEN

by LOUIS DUPREE

NANCY HATCH DUPREE

Women in northern Afghanistan are discriminated against from birth. In male-dominated Aq Kupruk society, women nevertheless manage to achieve positions of social and economic power, and behind the mud curtain, influence local political decisions. Village women usually control the sale of home industry products, and in the urban areas, women often make economic decisions, such as whether or not to rent a house owned by the family, and how much rent to charge.

Kibrya's mother spinning wool.

The Traditional View

Afghan society is often described as patriarchal (authority vested in hands of the oldest males), patrilineal (inheritance of property and status through the male line), and patrilocal (women move to husband's place of residence). In-group and in-village marriages dominate, however, so a woman is seldom far from her family and is often close kin to her husband.

Various terms are used to describe a woman's pilgrimage through life. She is first called by a nickname until she can walk; then called "girl" (*angeli*) until puberty; before marriage she is called "eligible"; after marriage, "wife." Only when she has a son is she called "woman," for then she has performed the highest duty—perpetuated the male line. At menopause, she is referred to as a "respected old woman." Seldom will anyone refer to a woman by her given name, and she becomes embarrassed when asked what it is. Instead, women are often called "mother-of-so-and-so" (*madar-i-Ghufran*, Ghufran being the oldest or only son). If a woman has a daughter and no sons, she will be called after the daughter (*madar-i-Satana*). A girl can be called by her given name until marriage, after which she becomes "wife-of-so-and-so" (*khatun-i-Sufi Sahib*) until a child is born.

Women in Islam

According to conservative Traditionalist interpretations, Islam theoretically places women in an inferior position to men. They often quote the following Koranic injunction to justify their position:

> Men are the managers of the affairs of women
> for that God has preferred in bounty
> one of them over another, and for that
> they have expended of their property.

Righteous women are therefore obedient,
guarding the secret of God's guarding.
And those you fear may be rebellious.
Admonish; banish them to their couches,
and beat them. If they then obey you,
look not for any way against them.
(Arberry, 1964: Sura IV, called *Women:* 77-78)

Modernists insist that there is no support in the Koran, the Hadiths,* or Sharia Law for the theory that the low status of Moslem women is to be laid at the doors of Islam, but lies instead with older cultural practices of southern and western Asia. In Islam's early years, moreover, women played important roles. The Prophet Mohammad as a young man married an older woman, Khadija, an important figure in the caravan trade between the Arabian Peninsula and the Levant Coast. She bore him four daughters and an unknown number of sons, all of whom died in infancy. One daughter, Fatima, married Ali, cousin of Mohammad, and constantly accompanied her father and husband during the fights between Mecca and Medina. Other young females bared their breasts during war dances to inflame Muslim warriors to deeds of valor.

Women wearing chadri.

The concept of the veil and purdah (isolation of women), which have become hallmarks of a Muslim woman's low status, came originally from the Christian Byzantine Empire of Anatolia and the Sasanian Zoroastrians of Persia. The harem concept too was of urban origin, foreign to the stringent codes of tribal, pre-Islamic Arabia. But the conquering Muslim Arabs became urbanized and were in turn conquered culturally, and under the Ottoman Empire the institution of the harem was carried to its zenith.

Islam permits a man four wives (and all the concubines he can support) under specific conditions: he must treat all wives *equally*:

...marry such women as seem good to you,
two, three, four, but if you fear
you will not be equitable, then only one,
or what your right hands own;**
so it is likelier you will not be partial.
(Arberry, 1964: 72. Sura IV: 3)

Few rural Afghans, however, can afford more than one wife: in 1972 less than 15 per cent of the marriages in Aq Kupruk were polygynous, and no man had more than two living wives. Polygyny is expensive and while husbands often threaten to take a second wife, they do so infrequently unless the first wife has failed to bear children. Of the few polygynous marriages in Aq Kupruk, a majority were Uzbak, possibly because Uzbak men quickly absorbed Uzbak widows into close-kin households. Being a minority in Aq Kupruk, the Uzbak have a limited choice of mates and a consequent desire to retain all the females within their own ethnic group.

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*Sayings of the Prophet Mohammad, used to rationalize or justify beliefs and actions concerning Muslim institutions (Dupree, 1973: 100-101). Later *tafsir* (Commentaries or interpretations), often influenced by non-Muslim, medieval European concepts concerning the role of women, distorted the original ideals.

**"What your right hands own" refers to slaves (i.e., concubines): (Roberts, 1971:7-17).

Saadat men will marry only Saadat women; Khoja marry either Khoja or Tajik; Tajik may marry Khoja, Tajik, or Uzbak women; Uzbak will marry Uzbak women locally, but may take Tajik wives from another village. Intermarriage is increasing, although no one in Aq Kupruk would marry a Moghol or Hazara.

Women living in Aq Kupruk generally look down on women living in small settlements (*qishlaq*) in the hills, although many *qishlaq* families have superior wealth. The Aq Kupruk women also snub women brought in as wives from the outside. Exceptions exist, and one imported wife from Maimana was accepted, grudgingly, because of her forceful personality. The wives of local government officials—outsiders all—constitute a breed apart. They look down on the local women as "country"; the women of Aq Kupruk returned the compliment, considering the outsiders as debauched "Kabulis."

Women of one household in Aq Kupruk on their way to visit another.

The Urban-Rural Dichotomy

Beliefs and practices concerning the role and status of women differ considerably between literate and nonliterate segments of the population in what is basically an urban-rural split. In urban Afghanistan, which is also a more secular society, Modernists believe women should not be kept in purdah nor wear veils in public, and should receive equal educational and job opportunities. Traditionalists believe women should have only the most rudimentary education, practice purdah, and in public wear the *chadri*, a head-to-toe sack-like garment with latticework embroidery over the eyes.

Several gradations exist between the two extremes. Some of the better educated, upper class families retain extremely conservative views concerning the status of women. They may permit their women to appear in public unveiled and even let them work outside the home in offices, but the older members of the family choose mates for the daughters and sisters. The political, social, and financial implications of upper class urban marriages are still too important to be entrusted to the young.

Young girls often voluntarily put on the *chadri*, at least initially, for it symbolizes their flowering womanhood; i.e., the beginning of menstruation, and advertises their availability for marriage—physically, if not mentally. In rural areas especially, the use of the veil has become associated with social status, as only the wealthier husbands could originally afford to keep their wives isolated from work and economic relationships with outsiders. Even where the practice has been abandoned by upper class and educated women in the cities, it has spread dramatically in the countryside as lower class groups have belatedly copied the styles of the elite.

Schoolgirls in Kabul.

Efforts by Afghanistan's governments to modernize conditions for women have had mixed success. Beginning in 1959, under the leadership of Prime Minister Mohammad Daoud (1953-1963, and again Prime Minister and President since July 1973) and with the sanction of the deposed king, Mohammad Zahir Shah (1933-1973), women began to emerge informally from their centuries-old isolation. Larger numbers attend Afghan and other universities each year. Afghanistan has had two women cabinet members and women now work in private offices and have appointments in every branch of government (including the armed forces and police). Still, family pressures prevent most women from completely abandoning tradition and the assumed religious sanctions for purdah. Planned marriages remain the rule, although more and more young people try to seek mates of their own choosing, finding arranged marriages incompatible with the Marriage Law of 1967 and the announced ideals of the new Republic of Afghanistan. Some young men and women have recently gone to court to protest parental wedding arrangements made without their assent.

The conflict women experience is a part of larger changes. Kabul is in a state of constant confrontation, sometimes subtly and intellectually, other times violently. Conservative *mullahs* (local, often poorly educated, religious leaders) staged month-long demonstrations in April-May 1970, for example, attempting to force the government to reverse several policies that contradicted strict Muslim practice. They unsuccessfully demanded the compulsory return of women to purdah and the veil, and abolition of secular education for women. In separate incidents, ultraconservative *mullahs* have been arrested and severely punished for attacking city women with acid and even small caliber pistols. Their apparent motive was to check the wearing of miniskirts, other Western clothing, and makeup, but huge counterprotests by emancipated women in Kabul indicated that the *mullahs* had inadvertently *strengthened* the movement toward women's rights, at least in the cities.

The Rural Milieu: Aq Kupruk

Rural women, like those in Aq Kupruk, are largely unaffected by such urban conflicts over the degree of emancipation of women. In spite of the many strictures, they live relatively freer lives than many of their urban sisters—and the nomad women of the *maldar* are the freest, but hardest working, of all. While rural women have almost no experience outside the domestic world, they are recognized and respected for the work they can and must perform. Yet many urban Afghan women, whether in purdah or not, are semi-educated and have little to do. They often while away their time in gambling, listening to the radio, or reading pulp novels from Iran. They are truly culturally disoriented creatures in Afghan society, with little status, and only the role of mother ascribed to them.

Film Dialogue

Some religious people do not send their daughters to school because they believe it opens their eyes too much.

On the other hand, it is good to open boys' eyes.

Some girls, of course, do go. Kibrya and Zuleiha went, but mostly it is only government officials and those who can afford it who send their girls to school.

School is good for boys, but not for girls.

Kibrya's Mother

The birth of a girl goes relatively unheralded in rural Afghanistan. While deliberate female infanticide rarely occurs, in the past unwanted girl babies reportedly died from calculated neglect, particularly in cases of extremely large families, and especially in urban areas. Men desire sons more than daughters, for sons increase political power, economic well being, and secure perpetuation of the family through the male line. The more sons, the more labor for the fields, the more fields which can be bought or rented, the more crops sold, the more money earned. (Personal wealth, not only in land and livestock but also in the form of hard cash, increasingly forms the real basis for prestige and political power in much of rural Afghanistan.)

Mothers, grandmothers, and maternal and paternal aunts supervise the socialization processes of all chidren until about the age of nine years. But very little formal, structured training takes place during this period. In general, a girl learns by doing, taking care of babies, collecting dung for fuel, and helping with ordinary household chores. Her closest male friends are her brothers, particularly her eldest brothers. Terms of endearment among them—for example, *lala* for eldest brother—may be used throughout their lives. Boys and girls mix freely, working and playing together until the girls reach puberty.

Between the ages of nine and 15, and especially from about age 13, a young girl begins to learn how to be a cook, laundrywoman, tailor, embroiderer, and mother. A girl will also be expected to work in the fields from time to time, especially during harvests. By the time most girls reach puberty, they are ready to perform responsibly in the household and to marry, although generally marriage does not occur until the girl reaches 15 or 16.

Daughters can be married into other locally wealthy families and their potential "bride price"* an economic exchange as well as a political alliance, is a consideration throughout the girl's upbringing. It is in urban areas that the concept of "bride price" is most liable to distortion, for it is more frequent that the element of reciprocity is absent. A wealthy khan, local leader, or an outsider, may purchase outright the beautiful daughter of a destitute peasant farmer. Such transactions, though less common than in the past, give the concept of "bride price" its bad connotation.

The dowry brought by the bride to her husband's home at least equals the bride price and includes clothing, bedding, and household utensils. The dowry is expected to last the couple about 15 years.

Many women in Aq Kupruk insist that dowries are commonly *double* the bride price. It takes years for a young girl to complete her dowry, its preparation occupying most of her time and energy. Since the majority do not attend school and have no opportunities for professional training, their entire early socialization points toward marriage.

Film Dialogue.

Payment for the bride varies.
For a young girl they give $1,000 or $500. Bibi Zainab's daughter, for instance, received $1,000 but if the bridegroom is poor he may pay much less.

A widow may receive $100 to $400. Of course, if a widow is beautiful, she may receive more.

Widow

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*The English term bride price (*shir baha* in Dari, *wulwar* in Pashto) gives the wrong impression, for what actually occurs is a two-way exchange of material wealth. The money and/or livestock given to the family of the bride compensates for the lost of an economically valuable asset: the working girl in hut and field. The bride price varies considerably from area to area. In Aq Kupruk, the average fluctuates around afghanis 20,000 (in 1972, about afs. 90 = US$1). For the daughter of a local leader, the bride price would be between afs. 50,000 and 100,000.

Rural Women at Work. Young girl (above left) begins training early for her role as mother, while an adolescent (above right) can already bake bread and tend to meals. Women of all ages work together at household tasks such as laundry (lower left), grinding grain into flour (right), and sewing (opposite). Older women are usually freed from the more rigorous tasks, although the grandmother (opposite right) probably had a role in preparing the assembled dowry items.

Typical Items Included in Dowry

40*	trouser drawstrings
30*	turban caps
40*	heavily embroidered handkerchiefs
5	elaborately embroidered squares (*dastmal*) worm as cummerbunds by men, shawls by women, or as wrapping for the Koran
2	woven rugs
2	felt rugs
2	large woven-wool squares (*borjama*) for storing pallets and pillows
2	carpet bags for storing clothing (*mafraj*)
4	finely woven rectangular wool cloths spread on floor when eating (*dastakan*)
10	embroidered wall hangings
10	patchwork wall hangings
2	tray covers
4	pillow covers
-	small embroidered squares
2	padded sleeves to protect arm when baking bread.
4	padded quilts
4	pallets stuffed with fluffed cotton
2	decorative bands wound around the inside of the yurt, at top of lattice base; woven of wool
2	extremely long bands of patchwork hung below ceiling around entire inside of main living room
3	yurt belts, wider than the inside decorative band, wound tightly around outside of lattice base to stabilize dwelling; woven of wool.
-	small bags to protect mirrors, wooden spoons in kitchen, etc., from dust; woven of wool
2	decorated fans
-	clothing
-	jewelry, particularly glass bead necklaces, colored plastic hairpins, plastic bracelets, silver earrings, silver *taawiz* (amulet) holders
6	teapots
12	cups, saucers, plates
1	tray
4	service platters
6	serving dishes
1	brass water pot
-	kitchen utensils
1	kerosene lantern
2	wooden chests
3	tin boxes

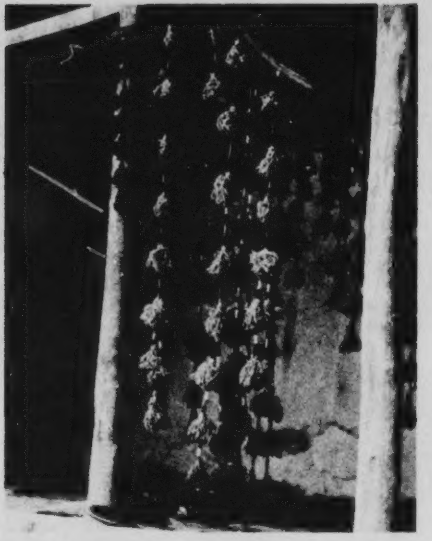
*Each male member of the family attending the marriage ceremonies receives one of these items, accounting for the large number each girl must make for her wedding.

Film Dialogue

Before a wedding we must make many things. It takes 2 or 3 years to get everything ready. We do a little bit at a time – and make ready all that we can afford. But it is pleasant work for we work together.

Kibrya

FILM
LINK



Tassels for a dowry.

FILM
LINK

Kin-related girls often hold round robin "sewing bees," especially at the end of the summer, which also ends the agricultural cycle. Food is served, tea drunk, gossip spread, and news collected. Generally the girls will work jointly on embroidered wall hangings, with each girl assigned a section. Up to 15 girls can work in this manner. The large rectangular hanging will be used as decoration and, at times, as a canopy or curtain for the bridal bed (or pallet) to insure a modicum of privacy. Others sew clothing or embroider turban caps for men's and ladies' hats, tea tray covers, pillow cases for the large pillows against which guests recline, small handkerchiefs, and larger handkerchiefs (*dastmal*) worn by men as cummerbunds for *Jeshn*, the National Holiday, or at weddings and other festivals.

The girls embroider with silk thread on cotton. They spend much time in spinning the silk, and decisions on designs involve protracted discussion as to how much silk will be required and what colors to use. Specialists draw the designs on cloth with a quill using ordinary ink; there are two designers in Aq Kupruk. Local bazaar shopkeepers import dyes from France, India, and Pakistan, although one yellow dye is made from a local hillside plant called *esparak*.

Married female relatives pitch in and help sisters, daughters, cousins, and friends accumulate the dowry. They particularly help with the spinning. Women in Aq Kupruk constantly visit one another, and *always* bring work with them, usually silk and wool to spin. In addition to the embroidery, women and girls make many items out of patchwork, which is also a reliable subject of conversation: visitors may spend hours discussing the origin of each piece of cloth—wedding dresses, children's clothing, a husband's turban cloth.

The hand-operated sewing machine (largely imported from India) has greatly speeded up home production of women's hats, children's vests, and swaddling bands. Unfortunately, a deterioration in folk art has also followed the machines. Yet fierce competition for praise of their handiwork exists among the women. They are proud of work well done and criticize each other's work as they go for water in the canal or river, or do their laundry, beating the clothes on stones.

Most weaving in Aq Kupruk is done by Uzbak women or the women of mixed Tajik-Uzbak families. Women from other families pay these part-time specialists to weave specific items, and also furnish the spun wool. The Saadat, Khoja, and Tajik women spin two types of wool skeins. The fine skeins are used for *dastakan* (the large, rectangular cloth which is spread on the floor for eating) and *burjama* (large squares, green with dark red stripes, used to wrap and store pallets and pillows to protect them from the dust). The thicker threads go into such items as *gelims* (flat-weave), donkey and horse-feeding bags, *kharjin* (saddle bags), bags for transporting grains and other produce, *bildow* (yurt belts), and other yurt accoutrements.

Felt items (yurt covers, rugs) are also important for the dowry. Drawstrings for the wide-waisted pants worn by both men and women are finger-woven and have elaborate tassels of many colored braids and tufts. These tassels are one of the first items young girls learn to make.

Girls store their dowry clothing and the smaller embroidered items in carpet bags and painted wooden boxes. The more affluent now use painted tin trunks from Mazar-i-Sharif. Elaborately decorated chests hold teapots, cups, saucers, and other dinnerware. The *burjama*, tied with colorful tasseled bands which hang down the sides for added decoration, are piled on top of the wooden chests.

Marriage

Engagements may occur early and last many years. Occasionally brothers will agree on engagements of their children *before* the birth of a son or daughter—a real gamble, and poorer families sometimes arrange marriages when the daughters are as young as 12 years. The *ideal* mate is one's first cousin, but in most cases such alliances are simply not possible because not enough first cousins exist to go around. In 1972, only about 20 per cent of such ideal unions existed in Aq Kupruk, although first cousin marriages are much more common among the urban upper classes and the regional power elites.

When parents decide their son or daughter is ready for marriage, they find a go-between, usually a kinsman or kinswoman, to handle the delicate financial negotiations with the girl's family. Among the modern literate families the principles may be consulted or even take part in choosing a mate, but parental authority is still strongest. Once begun, the marriage plans move irrevocably toward a conclusion. If the engaged couple are first cousins, they probably know each other quite well. If not, the betrothed find out about one another as their siblings spy out information.

When the go-between has successfully performed the mission, several ladies of the boy's family go to the girl's house for the ceremony of *labs griftan* (literally "to get—or take—the word, or promise"). The prospective groom's kin-ladies accept tea, sweets, and a special conical sugarloaf (*qand*), varying from 12 inches to two feet in height and six inches or more at the base. The sugarloaf is presented on a tray. An embroidered handkerchief, made by the bride-to-be, is also presented to indicate her acceptance. Both the handkerchief and the sugarloaf play important roles in later ceremonies.*

Within a week, the boy's family returns the tray filled with money. The girl's family may decide the amount of money is too small, and return the tray for more—or even call off the wedding. (Usually the amount has been decided upon previously at the *labs griftan* to prevent possible embarrassment.) Almost immediately

Film Dialogue

It takes five or six days to make a felt rug. After we pound the wool to make it light we lay out the colored design. Then we roll it up, soak it with hot water, and roll it to make the felt tight. Then we open it and dry it. When it is dry we soak it once more and roll it again.

If we roll it for three hours, it will last three years, four hours—four years, five hours—five years.

Kibrya's Mother

Film Dialogue

My daughter Kibrya was engaged during Id.

At first I said—no, no, no! I shan't give her away. But her father promised, she was pleased, and the young man insisted and insisted. So finally I said—all right, go!

When a young girl wishes to marry, it is up to herself and her father. They share the decision.

Kibrya's Mother

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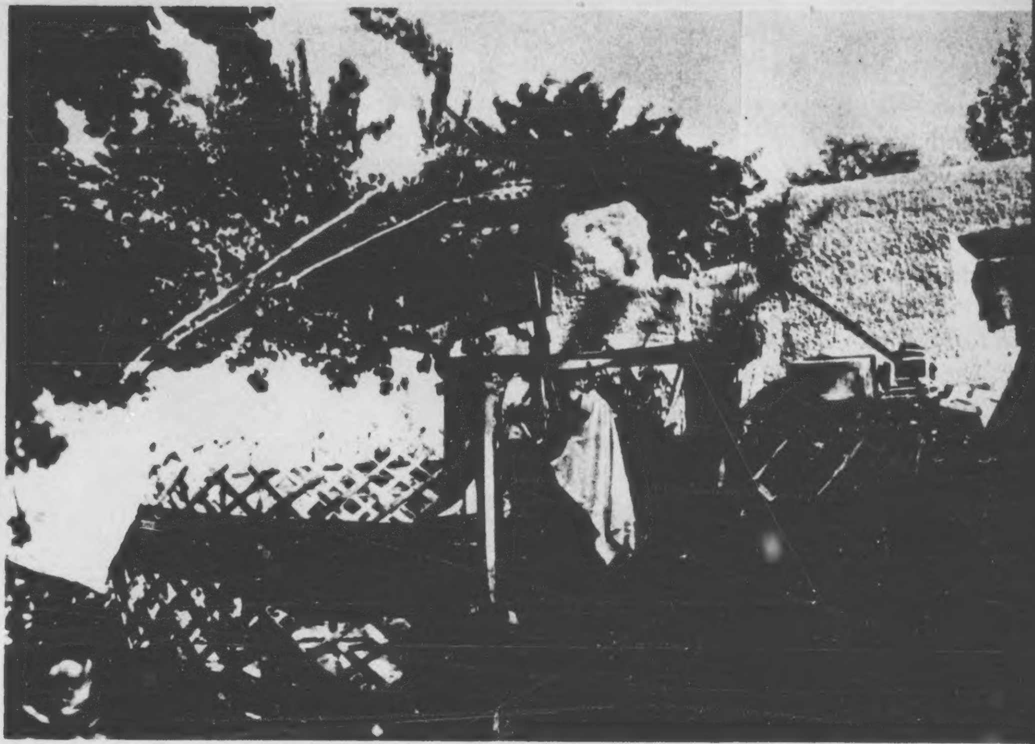
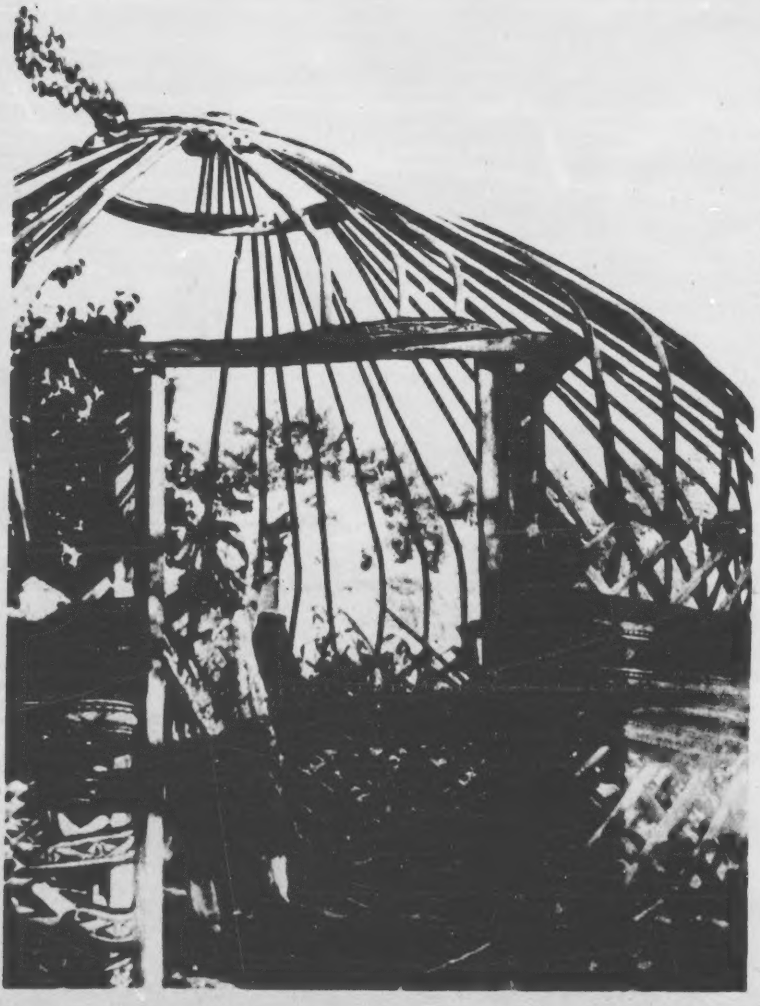
*The description of the various ceremonies related to marriage relate primarily to urban areas. Seldom are the rites so elaborately executed in rural areas.





Putting Up a Yurt

The door frame is first sunk into two small holes in the ground. Sections of a folding lattice are then tied together and onto the door frame with narrow woolen bands. The size of the yurt depends on the number of sections used and how far they are unfolded. A wide woolen band is wound tightly around the lattice base to steady it.

A wooden hoop is raised to the center of the yurt and held in place by curved roof-poles. The roof-poles are fitted into notches in the hoop and tied to the top of the lattice base with long woven bands of wool, which are left hanging down inside the yurt for decoration, and to suspend items for storage. Other narrow woven bands are also looped around the roof-poles to steady them.

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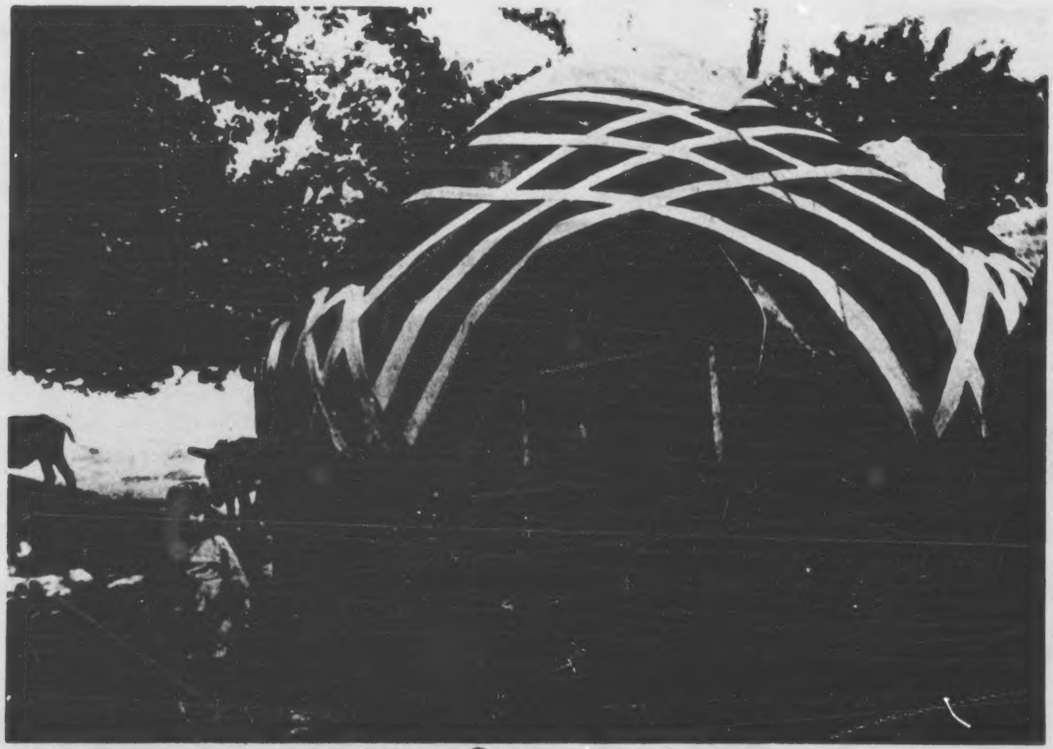
Reed matting covers are placed outside the lattice base for privacy. Large pieces of felt, cut to shape and bound, cover the roof-poles. Placing the heavy felt takes practice, dexterity, and strength. A rope tied tightly at the bottom edge of the felt battens down the first layer. The second overlapping felt layer is lifted into place by poles. Wide bands sewn onto the edges of this felt help guide the second layer into place. Pompoms are fixed to the edge of the bands on the second layer to add interior decoration.

A white cover crowns the yurt. When yurts are used in winter this piece can be pushed back to allow smoke to escape; in the summer, outside kitchens are used. Wide bands of white cotton sucured by looping them over the rope at the bottom of the first layer of felt batten down the roof. (Note that no reed matting covers the lattice to left. This side faced a private garden so the matting was left off to allow maximum ventilation; a house and another yurt stood to the right so matting was used for privacy.)



thereafter, the official betrothal ceremony, the *shirin-i-griftan* ("taking or eating sweets"), takes place. Traditionally, only the women attend the ceremony at the house of the bride's family. The women of the groom's family bring several dresses (at least four or five, a year's supply), some jewelry, and the three-piece silver lady's toilet set which includes tweezers, ear cleaner, and toothpick. If relatively well off, the groom's family may also present the engaged girl a silver necklace with fish pendants, ancient symbols of fertility. Another common folk symbol, the circle (related to the ancient sun or sunburst motif) guarantees the couple good luck.

At the *shirin-i-griftan*, close female relatives break the conical sugarloaf over the bride's head (to give her a sweet disposition?) with a ceremonial sugar axe, which usually is decorated with a stylized bird-of-life motif. (According to legend, the sun bird, omen of good fortune, brought divine nectar [*homa*] from heaven.) If the sugarloaf breaks into many fragments, the marriage will be long and happy. The bride's family uses the fractured cone to make the sherbet (*sharbat*) and sweet wheat pudding (*malida*) served at the wedding. The wedding sherbet is thick and colorless, flavored with rose water and containing black seeds (again a fertility symbol?) called *tokhm-i-riyan* or *tokhm-i-biryan*. The bride and groom feed each other bites of sherbet and *malida*, much as Western brides and grooms share the first slice of the wedding cake.

The *shirin-i-griftan* makes the engagement official, and, if the opportunity has not already occurred, gives the future in-laws a chance to get acquainted. At times, years pass between the formal engagement and the marriage, for one or more of the following reasons: the girl or the boy (or both) are considered too young; the family suffers some economic crises; the boy goes away for two years of military service, or to work seasonally on development or other projects. As the engaged girl waits, however, she must show respect at all times for her potential in-laws. At the approach of her future mother-in-law, a girl will cover her face, sit with her back to the crowd in a corner, or go outside the room.

The Wedding

The ideal time for marriage in Aq Kupruk is early fall (late September-October), after the completion of the wheat cycle.* Marriage is forbidden, however, between the two important religious festivals of Id-i-Qorban and Id-ul-Fitr, which follow the lunar calendar, occurring 11 days earlier each year. Traditionally the wedding (*arusi*) takes place over a three-day period. The father of the groom (and other close relatives) pays the bills, including payments to musicians, dancers (usually female impersonators), and singers. The families and their guests play chess, wrestle,

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*During the severe droughts of 1970-71, only two marriages took place in Aq Kupruk, but six were planned for the fall of 1972 following a bumper harvest. None of the six marriages involved first cousins, and one bride was to be a second wife (*ambok*). (The *ambok* should have been the first wife of her fiancée, but her father's failure to raise enough money for the required wedding festivities postponed the marriage for so long that the boy married another girl. The *ambok* hopes to have a boy baby first, thus enhancing her position in the household.)

gamble with cards, and compete in shooting and other games, in between drinking tea and eating the specially prepared sweets.

On the first day, the bride's relatives dress in their most colorful finery and go to the groom's house to socialize. On the next day, the reverse occurs, and the groom, often on horseback with a highly decorated horseblanket and saddle, leads his kinsmen. At intervals, his kin fire weapons in the air to announce his coming. On both these days, the musicians entertain the men while the women entertain themselves, singing, dancing, and playing games in another house or area. Also on the second day, the women prepare the bride for her removal to the groom's home. Female relatives annoint her hair with perfume and tie it into braids, using cloth with the seven colors of the rainbow to guarantee good luck. Often women sing ribald songs, accompanied by a tambourine and hand clapping. The older women make obscene remarks; their vocabulary is as earthy and descriptive as that of their farmer or shopkeeper husbands.

In late afternoon of the third day, the procession winds its way to the groom's house. The veiled bride rides on a horse in front of the groom's, one of the few times she will ever be in front. After the wedding, the husband will ride, the wife will walk.*

Once inside the groom's house the wedding party feasts, men and women eating separately. The bantering with both bride and groom continue unmercifully.

The actual marriage ceremony takes place on the third night. A *mullah* performs the wedding, at which time, theoretically, the bride and groom see each other for the first time. They gaze at each other's image in the reflection of a hand-held mirror. The *mullah* intones the beautiful Koranic injunctions concerning marriage, and asks the boy if he will provide for his betrothed and make her happy. He answers yes. The girl will often, as custom dictates, hesitate several times before answering. A male relative then paints the groom's little finger with henna, and ties a piece of embroidered cloth around the same finger. The groom does the same for his bride.**

Two final ceremonies prepare the couple for their departure from the wedding party. Close relatives cover the bride with seven veils. The top veil has four objects tied in the corners: saffron, crystalline sugar, cloves, and a coin symbolizing, respectively, marital happiness, family prosperity, individual purity, and collective security. Four male relatives (all brothers if four are available) untie and remove the objects, then lower the seventh veil.

The bride's father (or oldest brother if father is dead; if neither father nor brothers available, an uncle, preferably paternal) performs the *kamarbandi*. He knots the seventh veil together with a green turban cloth (the parental turban, symbol of authority), and ties the connected lengths around his daughter's waist, releasing her to her husband.

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*These days one often sees an Afghan woman with one or two babes in arms on a donkey along the road, with her husband walking alongside or leading. If both walk, she will remain several paces behind her husband. The origin of this custom is not so much to symbolize female inferiority as to protect her from the oncoming world.

**Few rural Afghans bother to register their marriages officially. The nearest *gazi* (government-trained, religious-cum-secular judge) to Aq Kupruk is at Sholgara.

The couple retires to the groom's room or hut and the party continues without them. In some areas of Afghanistan, a girl's virginity must still be demonstrated on her wedding night, and female relatives of the groom examine the bedding for evidence.* If a girl is not a virgin, she could be killed by the groom and his relatives, and her family would have to give a sister as replacement. (If a girl dies after the *shirin-i-griftan*, her family may also have to produce a sister [or another female relative] as a replacement.)

Divorce

In spite of the time, energy, and money expended on betrothals and weddings, divorce for the male is relatively easy. According to traditions sanctioned by Islam, all he has to do is repeat three times, "I divorce thee" (*tu-ra talaq mekunam* or *ta talaqawan*), dropping a stone each time to emphasize the finality of the action. If the wife's family bargained well during the wedding negotiations, a sizable amount of the dowry—plus compensation—will be awarded the divorcee. In urban areas, many court cases relate to the settlement of divorce actions. The main causes for divorce are barrenness in the wife (or no sons produced, only daughters), a nagging or ill-tempered wife , or failure to transmit the dowry to the husband's household. Family and public pressures, plus individual pride, make divorce infrequent.

More commonly, a dissatisfied husband takes a second wife (*ambok*), sometimes with the first wife's approval. A man may also take a second wife to fulfill previous family commitments or to cement political alliances. Wealthy families sometimes become wealthier by linking in marriage. In addition, wealthy men have been known to *pay* other men to take unwanted sisters (often unattractive or overbearing) as *ambok*.

In Aq Kupruk, a man with more than one wife always provides each with separate quarters in keeping with the equal treatment injunction in the Koran. Relationships between plural wives need not necessarily be antagonistic, and many pairs jointly visit homes of friends and relatives and participate in sewing bees.

The Damoclean-threat that a husband may take a second wife serves to keep wives in line. Newly married, young wives without sons feel particularly vulnerable, for, if their husbands take *ambok*, their families lose prestige. The attitude of most first wives toward an *ambok* (who, after all, shares in the housework) can be best summarized with a laugh and a quote: "Well, if she is nice it's fun; if she's not, it's horrible!" Most *ambok* enter their new status with some trepidation, fearing the wrath of the first wife. Some obtain amulets (*taawiz*), especially dried hoopoe heads and wolf claws, to guarantee the continued love and attention of the husbands, as well as assuring the sweet temper of the first wife in order to maintain peace and happiness in the household.

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*It is difficult to determine how much premarital sex occurs in rural Afghanistan, although in Aq Kupruk it is common folklore that a bride who is not a virgin can bring a small, blood-filled, membraneous sheep-gut pouch to bed, inconspicuously breaking it during the distractions of intercourse.

A divorced woman returns to her home, but she must leave all her children behind with the husband. If she is breast-feeding an infant, she must send it to her husband as soon as the child has been weaned. A man may remarry immediately after the divorce, but the divorced woman must wait three months (the traditional period is 100 days, by which time a pregnancy would be evident). The child of this pregnancy also goes to the husband, whether or not he is the biological father.

A woman's family will help her obtain a divorce only under extreme conditions, such as a husband's sterility (seldom proved, however), excessive cruelty, or repeated, demonstrable adultery. (Stories about women who chose suicide to divorce are repeated in Aq Kupruk, but no one knew of an actual case.)

In contrast to the emphasis on premarital chastity, much extramarital activity occurs in rural Afghanistan, although heavy penalties result.* In former times, the couple could be stoned to death by the wife's husband and his relatives, but this tradition is gradually being replaced by divorce.

Given the prevalence of extramarital activities, it may seem surprising that few folktales denounce the practice. Most of the stories, especially those told by women, make the cuckolded male look silly—and do not condemn the act. Several reasons may account for this. For example, many folktales condemn cowardice in battle, for cowardice, a *public* act, disgraces the *group* as well as the individual. Adultery, a private act, endangers group equilibrium only when made public, when it disgraces the husband, and by extension, potentially violates the property rights of his younger brothers, because of the levirate. So all the husband's immediate kinsmen become involved in a matter of honor and property, and, since violence is always just beneath the surface of the rural Afghan community, there are frequent explosions.

The explanation may also rest on the simple biological fact that a woman always knows she is the mother of her children, but a man can never be really sure. In peasant-tribal societies with unsanctioned but widespread adultery, acknowledged fatherhood is more important than *biological* fatherhood. By refusing to admit the existence of adultery Afghan rural folk perpetuate the group. But it requires that women faithfully play their enforced public role as inferiors. (They do, in fact, have little free choice in any matter except in their choice of a lover or lovers and women are often the aggressors in clandestine affairs.)

Motherhood

Wives become pregnant as quickly and as often as their husbands can successfully impregnate them and only with the birth of a son does a wife finally attain the full status of woman. Infant

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*Two cases occurred in Aq Kupruk in 1972, which illustrate the consequences of such extramarital affairs. The first involved a 24-year old Uzbak girl who left her husband (an Uzbak farmer of about 60) for a young Tajik man. The couple was not seen again but the old husband continued to visit the bazaar with the little boy his wife had borne five years prior, and asking: "Have you seen my wife? She hasn't come home, and our son needs her." Many in Aq Kupruk laughed at the innocence of the Uzbak man, and even doubted that he was the true father of the bewildered child who accompanied him.

The other case was a similar disappearance of a young wife (20) from an older husband (a Tajik farmer of 40), but this time the woman's body was found mutilated on the river bank at Sholgara the next day. The husband, though congenitally crippled in one leg, was arrested and beaten on the feet (bastinado) by the police. Rather than confessing, he claimed that a wealthy man had taken his wife by force. The victim's mother insisted that her daughter was killed by her husband — because she had not borne children — and cried for more punishment of the farmer. Young women made charms from a quilt which had covered the victim, to protect them from the same fate. But much of the village gossip after the event centered around the belief that the murdered girl had had several lovers, and that one became jealous enough to kill her.

Film Dialogue

My young son Hafiz died recently. Five of my children have died, two daughters and three sons. But I still have six children who are like brothers and sisters to me.

While children live, they are a joy for this world; and if any should die they will wait for us in the next world. In Heaven they will bring us water from the sacred pool . . . . And they will stand at the doors of hell to protect their parents from it.

Kibrya's Mother

Film Dialogue

Our people say it is good to have lots of children and that it is a sin to take medicine against having them.

Kibrya's Mother

mortality is high, with about 40 per cent dying before two years of age, mainly of chronic gastrointestinal diseases. Parents and relatives grieve when children die, but console themselves in the belief that children will prepare places for them in paradise. Maternal mortality is also high, chiefly from childbed fever, because few village midwives understand modern sanitary procedures.* Most rural women refuse to be helped in childbirth or even to be examined by outsiders, particularly male doctors. And even if the woman did consent to be examined, her husband would probably prohibit it.

Having produced several children, women in Aq Kupruk generally want access to birth control techniques and medicines, but add: "Don't tell my husband!" (On a few occasions, both husbands and wives have confided their desire for birth control information.) Women sometimes employ local, dangerous abortion techniques, using needles, various herbal concoctions, or physical force to end the pregnancy. In rural areas such as Aq Kupruk, folk and religious beliefs regarding family planning are inseparable. Other literate Afghans are more concerned with Islam's compatibility with various birth control methods: Traditionalists oppose birth control; Modernists favor at least certain techniques, particularly coitus interruptus.

Barrenness is a terrible social stigma, and childless women often seek amulets from *mullahs* to make them fertile and pester visiting foreigners for magic medicines which will cause impregnation. People in Aq Kupruk, like most Afghans, believe that a man can never be sterile; the female is always at fault. One nonplussed woman in Aq Kupruk, married a second time but with several children by her first husband, could not understand why she failed to have any by her second husband. Suggestions that he might be sterile were greeted with horrified disbelief.

After the birth of a child, women traditionally remain isolated for 40 days, the period of womb purification and readjustment. All birth fluids and the afterbirth, considered unclean, are buried unceremoniously. Only the wife's mother, midwife, and close female relatives visit a new mother. But even in Aq Kupruk, women with a more modern outlook violate this rule.

Widowhood

A young widow's lot is difficult. She may be given to a brother of her deceased husband (the levirate), possibly one much younger than herself. In many such situations, she will be a second wife. When no one wants the widow, as rarely happens, she will be sent back to her family, but her children remain with the husband's family. An elderly widow will probably be a grandmother and will live with—and be protected by—her sons. Elderly childless widows have the worst lot in the society, being reduced to live literally as beggars and village-supported charity cases.

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*The experience of one Uzbak family is illustrative. The husband had married three times. His first two wives died in childbirth; the three women collectively produced 23 children, of which five survived to reach puberty, three daughters and two sons.

A young widow with brothers living nearby is fortunate, for they can protect her interests, including preventing her from being forced into a marriage she objects to. As stated earlier, brother-sister relations are usually very close and intense. On several occasions in Aq Kupruk, wives fled home to their brothers for protection from irate, unreasonable husbands. One such husband tried to get the district governor to force his wife to return to his home, but the governor refused to intervene.

One particularly lovely widow (about 30 years old) with an eleven-year-old son was being sought after by several men. A wealthy landowner from Zari offered afghanis 100,000 (top price) to her and her brother if she would marry him. She refused, because she did not want to be an *ambok*. Several other men had tried to marry her, but she consistently refused because, each time, her son objected. The eleven-year-old son was already engaged to his mother's brother's two-year-old daughter, to save the widow from the responsibility for raising a high "bride-price" later. He looked on himself as head of the family, and did not want to despoil the memory of his father, dead only two years. The widow did want to remarry eventually, and in the meantime, her brother looked after her. She hoped that within another year her young son would become reconciled to a stepfather.

* * * * *

The women of Aq Kupruk have subordinate status in their world, but their lives are neither all drudgery nor lacking excitement. During the day in Aq Kupruk, the town, excepting the bazaar, belongs to the women. Little happens without their knowledge, abetted by an informal spy system operated by preteen boys and girls. At night, when weather permits, many women sleep on rooftops and few incidents escape their notice. Ladders in each compound permit easy access to neighboring compounds and narrow lanes connect more distant points. Women sometimes take short cuts, crawling under small canal bridges which lead into the compounds and surprising the hosts. Village architecture helps insure

Film Dialogue

What's a poor widow to do?
One man offered me $2,000. He was from Zari. But I said no.

Why should I embitter my life to become his second wife?

My heart is king and I am its minister; wherever it goes, I go.

Widow

FILM
LINK

On the rooftops of Aq Kupruk

FILM LINK

the women's privacy: the more affluent households have high doors entering into a spacious courtyard, with a guesthouse to one side. Beyond this guest courtyard, and entered by another gate, another large courtyard unfolds, seen by few men outside the immediate family.

Some women in Aq Kupruk wear the sack-like *chadri* while visiting other women, but its use is limited to those few who have visited Mazar-i-Sharif, Shibarghan, or Kabul (mainly wives of officials). Saadat, Khoja, and Tajik women wear the *chadri*; rarely the Uzbak.

Most women wear a red-flowered or white shawl (*chadar*) which not only protects the hair from dust but also may be used for many other purposes: babies can be wrapped in its folds and fed in privacy; small items can be tied in the corners and transported; it can be worn comfortably in the fields while women work with men (the *chadri* cannot). Women wear colorful hats (*arachin*) distinctive in shape and design from the turban caps (*kolah*) of the men, underneath the *chadar* and the *chadri*. To remove the *arachin* in public is considered brazen, almost as bad as being seen with hair unbraided and flowing.

The women are in constant movement throughout the town during the day. Hands are never idle, busy with household chores or crafts as they socialize. And there are frequent special outings: to birth, wedding, and death ceremonies; to a friend's melon fields for a day's picnic; to nearby villages where they have close relatives and friends.

But the boredom, frustrations, and occasional mistreatment (particularly in urban areas) takes its psychological toll, and forms of hysteria (screaming, ripping off clothes in public, shouting obscenities, etc.) occur. Special shrines are devoted to the treatment and cure of such maladies.* The afflicted woman visits the shrine with close relatives and she generally responds quickly to the genuine concern of her family.

In most families in Aq Kupruk, a warm, friendly—and often joking—relationship exists between man and wife. Together they play with the younger children and grandchildren as much as their chores will allow. They often insist on being photographed *en famille*. In addition, the entire family looks forward to the summer move to the *yilaq* to reap wheat and pick melons as a lark.

The women often amuse themselves by making fun of and mimicking the men. Although women are divorced from the man's world in public, often the men will discuss important political events with their wives before they take their opinions to the town council (*majlis*).

*Women often visit shrines, but seldom mosques. They pray, but seldom as a group.

Film Dialogue

Last year we had many difficulties. Because of the drought food was scarce. We had to work very hard – but thanks to God and our king, this year has been good.

Kibrya's Mother

Only death eventually gives women equality. Although a separate ritual sees them to the burial ground, the low anonymous mounds in the cemeteries keep their secrets.

When I die do not weep for me.
Let no wailer follow my bier.
Only put dust on my grave,
since my right side deserves no more
dust than my left.
Put neither wooden nor stone signs
Upon my grave.
When you have buried me
sit on my grave for the time
that the slaughter of a camel and
the distribution of its meat would take—
so that I may enjoy your company for a little while.*

Spinning wool with spindle whorl.

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* Modified after the translation of the last will of Amr bin al-As, by I. Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, ed. by S.M. Stern, George Allen, and Unwin, 1967, p.232. Amr bin al-As was a contemporary of the Prophet Mohammad and noted as the conqueror of Egypt.

AFGHAN NOMADS: THE *MALDAR*

by LOUIS DUPREE

Each spring the maldar *travel with their flocks of sheep and goats to the mountain grazing areas. In the fall they return to the low lands for the winter.*

This Mohmand Pushtun group has traveled some 250 miles from the Turkestan Plains to the high grasslands of the Central Hindu Kush.

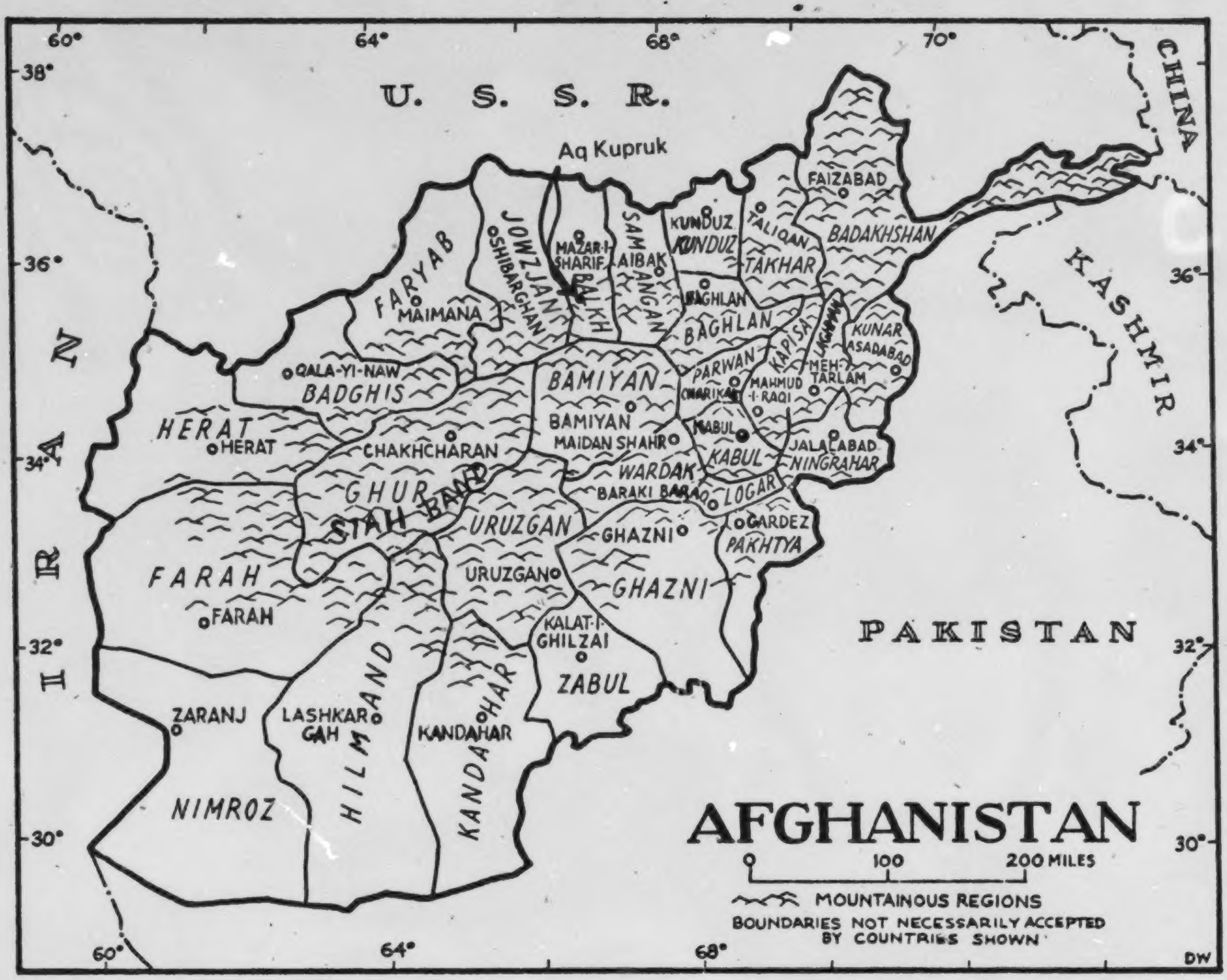
With their return journey almost ended they camp near the village of Aq Kupruk. They sell sheep and goats in the bazaar and buy flour and other supplies before continuing on their way.

Maldar means "owners of property," and to the nonsedentary peoples of northern Afghanistan and elsewhere, property refers to large flocks of sheep and goats. Such flocks can be supported by seasonal movements to the fresh grazing areas, while sedentary farmers must limit their stock according to the constraints of local grasslands. The *maldar* are therefore proud of their way of life.To them, settlements in a year-round home is associated with failure and old age, so that despite the government's efforts to encourage such settlement, nomad caravans continue their yearly migrations between winter and summer quarters (called *quishlaq* and *yilaq*, respectively). Twice a year about 1,500 tents of *maldar* (about 7,500 people) pass through the town of Aq Kupruk.

The Mohmand Pushtun group which departed from Zari for Aq Kupruk on August 4 is one of six segments which gather at the tribe's traditional *yilaq* in the Siah Band Mountains. Altogether about one-half of the 5-600 Mohmands leave the *quishlaq* near Bagh-i-Koland (Garden of Koland) each May for the annual trek, while others tend the home region in the plains. Different members of the tribe make the journey each year so that all the younger people will periodically have a chance to live the nomad life.

On the Move

Maldar groups string out like armies of ants along the narrow trails of Afghanistan, splitting with military precision into two segments where the mountains become too rocky and narrow to accommodate both flocks and pack animals.The young warriors then stump along the higher loess-covered grassy slopes with grazing sheep and goats, while the baggage train of camels, cattle,


U. S. S. R.
CHINA
KASHMIR
PAKISTAN
IRAN
Aq Kupruk
FAIZABAD
BADAKHSHAN
TALIQAN
TAKHAR
KUNDUZ
JOWZJAN
SHIBARGHAN
MAZAR-I-SHARIF
BALKH
SAMANGAN
AIBAK
BAGHLAN
FARYAB
MAIMANA
QALA-YI-NAW
BADGHIS
HERAT
BAMIYAN
PARWAN
CHARIKAR
KAPISA
LAGHMAN
MAHMUD-I-RAQI
MEHTARLAM
KUNAR
ASADABAD
KABUL
JALALABAD
NINGRAHAR
MAIDAN SHAHR
WARDAK
BARAKI BARAK
LOGAR
GARDEZ
PAKHTYA
CHAKHCHARAN
GHUR
SIAH BAND
URUZGAN
GHAZNI
FARAH
KALAT-I-GHILZAI
ZABUL
ZARANJ
LASHKAR GAH
HILMAND
KANDAHAR
NIMROZ
AFGHANISTAN
0 100 200 MILES
MOUNTAINOUS REGIONS
BOUNDARIES NOT NECESSARILY ACCEPTED BY COUNTRIES SHOWN
60° 64° 68° 70°
38° 36° 34° 32° 30°
DW

horses, donkeys, older men, women, and prepubescent children plods along the main, lower trail.

Loaded with 300 pounds in these mountains and 400 in the plains, the camels shuffle along with the unconcern of their species, secure in the knowledge that they alone, of all creatures, know the hundredth name of Allah. Their wooden packs creak with each step, laden with such goods as tents, poles, pots, pans, five-gallon kerosene containers, kerosene lamps, wooden and leather storage boxes, musical instruments, and iron cooking trivets. Small children, calves, lambs, kids, puppies, and chickens tied on top of the loads bob and weave in time with the movement of the humps. Ropes linking each camel by its iron cheek-bit to the tail of its precedessor hold the caravan together.

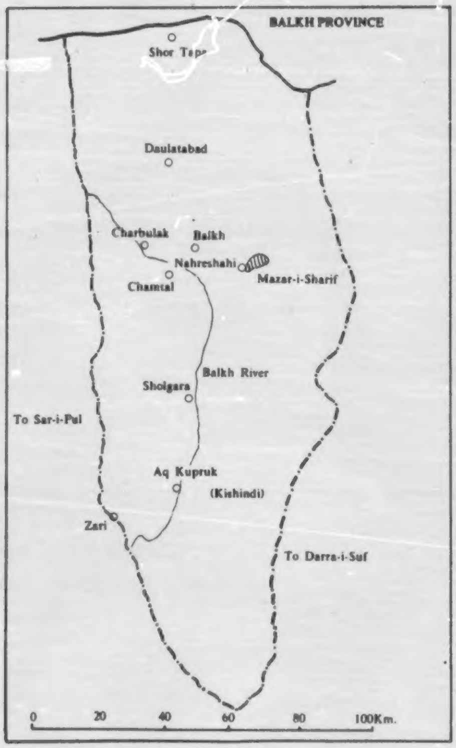
The donkeys, and even cattle, also serve as beasts of burden, while large, well-trained, mastiff-like dogs accompany both the upper and lower trail groups. Khans (chiefs) and their sons ride horses, prestige animals which seldom feel any burden but the weight of a man (or possibly a pregnant woman).

The nomadic womens' headshawls, bordered with a heavy band of gold braid, are worn without a cap underneath. In addition to heavy silver ornaments *(tikka)*, long strands of white glass beads are also popular. The nomadic dress style includes a yoke heavily embroidered or ornamented with gold and silver braid.

Maldar women often ride the camels, wearing their best clothing and jewelry while traveling. They decorate their camels with brightly colored trappings, and drape valued rugs or cloth over the saddles to create a kaleidoscopic impression that arouses the envy of townswomen in every village through which they pass. Coins of various denominations and dynasties are sewn into the women's clothing, making them walking banks. Woman-stealing is consequently as much a fiscal as a sexual goal.

Mohammad Ismail Khan and His Mohmand

After their 15-hour trip from Zari, the Mohmand Pushtun group pitched tents near Aq Kupruk in the light of early morning. Generally traveling in late afternoon and through the night to avoid the punishing August sun, they stay about three days at each town to trade and to water their animals before continuing. Mohammad Ismail Khan, as chief of this group (and of all six of the groups which meet at the Mohmand *yilaq*), must plan these moves with military precision, because many groups and hundreds of thousands of sheep and goats thread their way along the same routes each year. In the Aq Kupruk area alone, about 450,000 sheep and goats (about 2 per cent of the estimated total of 22 million sheep and 3 million goats in Afghanistan), 10,500 camels (about 8.5 per cent of the total 3 million), and unnumbered thousands of donkeys pass through twice a year. About 55 days elapse from the time the first group arrives in July until the last departs, but the period of maximum concentration of *maldar* in this area is mid-August, when reaping is at a peak and surplus wheat can be purchased in the bazaar. During the visit of Ismail

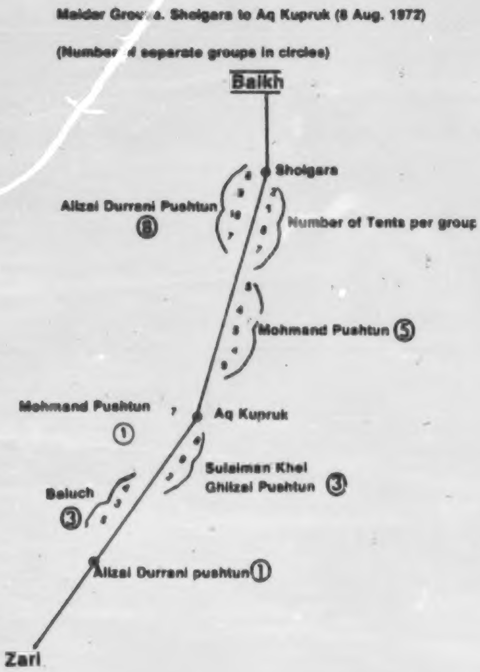


Khan's group in August 1972, 21 separate camps consisting of 151 tents (about 750 people), and about 50,000 sheep and goats were counted within 40 kilometers of Aq Kupruk, excluding several gypsy-like bands. Camp sizes ranged from two to 18 tents, averaging eight to nine; with an average of five people per tent. Twenty-six of the 151 tents were within 30 minutes walking distance of Aq Kupruk (see sketch).

Ismail Khan's group consisted of seven tents, 2,000 sheep and goats, 50 camels, five adult males, six teenage boys (also considered adults by the group), 22 women and unmarried girls past puberty, and two infants (girl and boy), both born in the *yilaq* in June.

Women do most of the work in setting up the *maldar* camps, but the men do pitch in and lift the heavier items. Everyone knows his or her job in this age-graded society. While young girls take care of the infants, the younger boys look after the dogs, and observe the loading and unloading of animals, learning as they help out. They graduate first to loading donkeys alone, then, as teenagers, to camels. Only when they can handle the camels do they become fully recognized as men.

In the early morning and late afternoon, the flocks were led past Aq Kupruk to the Balkh River for watering. Incredible sights and sounds arose when the sheep and goats moved in single file toward the river, the still air cracking with the metallic echo of tiny hooves as the flocks followed their large, intelligent *shahbuz* (lead or "king goat"). Shepherds sang, sheep baaed, dogs barked, donkeys brayed—all was bedlam until the watering began. Stillness returned as the animals drank, then gradually clustered about their respective *shahbuz* until the shepherds and dogs moved them out, passing another flock that tapped its way to the water as they climbed back to their grazing. Back on the hills, the sheep clustered in starburst patterns as each animal attempted to stand in the shade of another.


Maldar Grou .. Sholgars to Aq Kupruk (8 Aug. 1972)
(Number of separate groups in circles)
Balkh
Sholgars
Alizai Durrani Pushtun ⑧
Number of Tents per group
Mohmand Pushtun ⑤
Mohmand Pushtun ①
Aq Kupruk
Suleiman Khel Ghilzai Pushtun ③
Beluch ③
Alizai Durrani pushtun①
Zari

Sketch by Afghan Bureau of Consulting Architects and Engineers N.A. SABERI.

The *shahbuz* and his herd.

At night, the young warriors and dogs kept watch. The men sing songs of love and war; they plot raids. They talk of their hunts with falcons and *tazi* (Afghan hounds), which they do not consider dogs (by custom, most Muslims consider dogs unclean). Across the stillness could be heard the singing of other warriors, and the sheep seemed to know the sounds of their own shepherds' voices. At times, the shepherds entered into song competition. One would sing a familiar couplet; another from across the valley would supply the succeeding couplet. Improvisation is encouraged and insults in sexual double-entrendre are commonly flung at each other. Many are variations on the Pushtun couplet: "A young boy with a bottom like a peach sits across the river—and I can't swim." Others describe in graphic detail the myriad possibilities of love-making between man and woman, man and man, and man and animal. Such earthiness comes naturally to those who live on the land, whether nomads or farmers.

While the men play at being men, the women make and repair the tents; cook; make butter, ghee and cheeses; weave and sew; make felt; bear the children, and help raise them. In spite of their heavy work load, *maldar* women live relatively freer lives than their village counterparts, and influence most decisions concerning the group.

Both men and women feel their nomadic way of living, while threatened by the forces of change, is generally superior to that of sedentary townspeople. Since most of them return to their own land after traveling throughout the summer, they feel they have the best of both worlds. Though Mohammad Ismail Khan complained of the harsh life of the nomad and spoke with passion about government neglect and lassitude, he would not change his way of life. He put it beautifully: "Those who have both land and sheep live like kings."

Film Dialogue

I can't afford to send my children to school,
. . . if I did . . .
. . . the school would always want more money . . .
One month money for fuel . . .
next month money for windows.

If my children go to school . . .
who will work with me?

Mohammad Ismail Khan

Film Dialogue

Those in power do not believe herding is important.

The government says, "He's a Maldar, *he cannot be trusted."*

Many present petitions . . .

. . . but officials do not listen.

I ask myself . . .
why keep a herd?

M.I.K.

The present government of Afghanistan has a different opinion of nonsedentary people. The *maldar* have proved difficult to control in the past, and have often tipped the scales decisively in regional squabbles or fights for the throne. Few *maldar* pay taxes, many engage in smuggling, almost none perform national service. Because the state owns all uncultivated land in Afghanistan, it has the potential ability to encourage or force the *maldar* to give up their nomadic lives by prohibiting grazing in their traditional *yilaq* areas. And because political power appears to be shifting away from the *maldar*, the government is increasingly more able to realize this potential.

Many nomad groups have already settled to some degree, usually for more complex social and economic reasons than mere political pressure. Therefore a typology of the nonsedentary peoples of Afghanistan is in order. Generally speaking, the nonsedentary peoples can be divided into three categories, based on economy and settlement patterns: nomadic, seminomadic, and semisedentary.

Nomads. Few fully nomadic groups exist in Afghanistan, excluding the nonherding gypsies and itinerant gangs of workers. True nomads are herdsmen who travel constantly, searching for grass along culturally and historically predetermined routes, who depend largely on their flocks for their economic well-being, even though some may own land. There are three types of nomadic movement: (1) a generally horizontal pattern with forage centers at oases; (2) biannual long-distance moves between winter and summer camps made by *all* members of a fully nomadic group. These migrations are vertical as well as horizontal, because the route moves from lowland plains to high pasturelands; and (3) a basically vertical pattern, like that of the small groups of Kirghiz in the Pamir Mountains of Afghanistan, who move seasonally up and down with their sheep, goats, yaks, and Bactrian (two-humped) camels.

Seminomads. Seminomads are herdsmen who do some farming. Under this definition, less than 50 per cent of the whole group remains behind to farm in the *qishlaq* (winter quarters).

Semisedentary groups. These are farmers who also practice extensive herding, but more than 50 per cent of the group remains behind to farm. The rest travel with the herds on the annual migrations. This category also includes farmers who seasonally move with their families from villages to highland fields a few hours away, where *lalmi* (unirrigated) wheat and other highland crops are grown.

For years, most sources have estimated a population of about 2 million nonsedentary Afghans, close to the true figure if all the above categories are included; the bulk are, like Mohammad Ismail's group, seminomads evolving toward semisedentarism.

The *maldar* camp at Aq Kupruk.

This trend at first created some in-group tensions, because none of the young men wanted to remain behind to farm. Those left behind continued to live in tents, but gradually incipient farmers would dig shallow pits inside the tent for cooler comfort and construct *pisé* (pressed mud) walls around the outside edges for protection against the wind. The wall grew higher, the tent was pulled down, a wood-beamed roof went up, and a mud hut was created. As this process occurred, more and more of the group became involved in agriculture, and a semisedentary pattern evolved; i.e., more than 50 per cent remained in the *qishlaq* to farm in summer.

Today, few groups live in tents in winter; most move into huts. When the groups that are to accompany the flocks move out, they often dismantle their roofs and store the beams with kinsmen or friends to prevent theft of the scarce wood.

While estimates suggest that the population of *maldar* in all categories has been relatively unchanged for several generations, this balance maintained through time may be deceptive. Although the grasslands can support only a specific number of livestock, the human population has probably increased, and the surplus population has been siphoned off, at least seasonally and particularly since World War II, to work in the cities or on regional development projects.

It was the major population shifts occurring throughout the reign of Amir Abdur Rahman (1880-1901), that brought many of the present *maldar* groups to Northern Afghanistan. Dissident Pushtun and Baluch groups, both sedentary and nonsedentary, were forcibly moved to northern Afghanistan from their natural habitat south of the Hindu Kush. Other groups (especially the Durrani tribe of Abdur Rahman) moved north voluntarily (with adequate economic inducements) to settle along the frontier as a buttress against Czarist Russian encroachments. As the nonsedentary peoples established new routes of migration (not always peacefully), they introduced intensive trade in the central mountains for the first time, and a series of symbiotic patterns developed.

A Dog Barks, The Caravan Passes
(Old Proverb)

In 1972, the first *maldar* to stop outside Aq Kupruk on return from their summer pasturelands arrived on the morning of July 26, and the last departed on September 4. (In 1965, the first group arrived on July 12. The later the *maldar* leave the mountain pasturelands, the better the year for both grazing and crops, which indicates sufficient water for that particular year.) During this season the loess-covered hills surrounding Aq Kupruk are usually capped with sheep and goats, huddled together in the heat

The bazaar in Aq Kupruk.

of the day. Many *maldar* groups camp near the freshly reaped wheat fields, which are also good for grazing. This traffic leaves hill summits and other areas bald of grass, but also tends to cover the ground with manure that is used as fertilizer and fuel by the townspeople. When plowed under in the wheat fields, the manure replaces much of the nitrogen lost through previous cultivation. This is one basic level of the complex symbiosis between the *maldar* and the settled townspeople.

Economic symbiosis. When the *maldar* come to the town, they sell livestock, milk and milk products (i.e., cheeses, yogurt, buttermilk, ghee or clarified butter, and *roghon-i-dumbah*—lard rendered from the tail of the fat-tailed sheep), leatherwork, skins, and rugs in the bazaars through which they pass; in return they purchase grains, flour, vegetables, fruits, nuts, and other items from the villagers. In this manner, the diets of both sedentary and nonsedentary populations are supplemented.

Many *maldar* also raise the famous *qarakul* (mistakenly called "Persian Lamb") lambskins for export. Lambs are slaughtered unceremoniously at birth to obtain the finest skins of black, brown, gray and the highly prized (to the Afghans) golden color. The patrician broadtail is created when the unborn lamb is "from its mother's womb untimely ripped," killing both. Overseas tastes vary in time. In 1968, for example, the international market bought 30 per cent gray and 70 per cent black. Afghanistan therefore lost much of the market for two reasons: (1) inferior curing, dusting, and grading of skins; (2) the Soviet Union and South Africa specialized in black skins. In 1973, the percentages had reversed (70 per cent gray; 30 per cent black), and since the Afghans had better quality gray, their share of the world market jumped considerably. Improvement in the quality of Afghan skins had been the direct result of the efforts of the Afghan Karakul Institute, founded in July 1966.

In smaller villages, *maldar* often trade or sell other goods originally purchased in town and city bazaars: cloth, iron implements, sandals, tea, sugar, *gur* (unrefined molasses), guns, ammunition, and (recently) transistor radios and batteries. The transistor radio has broadened the international and national horizons of the nonliterate Afghan. Regional news and local rumors still spread by word of mouth, however.

In Aq Kupruk, *maldar* usually buy wheat when they pass through in harvest season, for their own use and to sell in other towns they will visit. The last group of *maldar* to arrive in Aq Kupruk in 1972, for example, purchased all the surplus wheat they could find in the bazaar. A seven-tent group of Mohammadzai (subsection of Barakzai Durrani Pushtun) who winter near Balkh resold most of the grain in Balkh and Mazar-i-Sharif as winter progressed.

Villagers sometimes borrow money at high interest rates from the wealthier *maldar* in order to meet the expenses of such rituals and celebrations as birth, circumcision, marriage, and death. In addition, poorer farmers purchase goods on credit.

The collecting of debts as the *maldar* return through the debtor's village often leads to violence. If a small landowner cannot pay his debts, as the interest accumulates annually and the principal remains unpaid, he may lose his land title to the *maldar*. Then the farmer becomes a tenant, paying annual rent to the new owner. Usually, however, the *maldar* prefers to keep the farmer in debt, and not take title to the land. Whenever a farmer loses his land, the situation becomes and remains volatile, so the *maldar* collects as much as he can annually, and gives the farmer hope of eventually repaying his debts. Sometimes, however, if the farmer does raise enough money (usually through off-season work in towns and cities), the *maldar* may refuse to accept payment, particularly if he already has title to the land. The farmer may resist, but unless he belongs to a stronger tribal or ethnic unit, the *maldar* may drive him away, and hire other tenants to farm the land—or even leave some of his own *maldar* kinsmen on the land. This pattern of displacement at least partly accounts for some of the twentieth century rural-urban migration.

Film Dialogue

How can a poor man buy irrigated land in our country?
It is too expensive
If God sends rain . . .
. . . highland wheat will grow.
If not, we have nothing.
Irrigated land is good land, but there's not enough of it in Afghanistan.

M.I.K.

In 1972, none of the farmers in the vicinity of Aq Kupruk were in debt to *maldar*, although many owed money to local shopkeepers and large landholders.

In the area where Mohammad Ismail's group spends the summers, the Durrani, a wealthier *maldar* group, also own some farming land which belonged previously to local Aimaq villagers, who had borrowed large sums from the Durrani and then defaulted.

The *gerau* system of mortgage is another form of indebtedness which offers the *maldar* an opportunity to collect wheat rather than cash. A farmer will borrow a certain number of afghanis and, in return, the *maldar* collects about one-half of the wheat crop, until the debtor can repay the principal. Most outright barter occurs during the summer: wool for wheat; or *roghan* for wheat.

In addition, local villagers are often hired by *maldar* to watch over their flocks, and some shepherds, hired by and traveling with the *maldar*, will even occasionally hire villagers for at least part of the time in the *yilaq*.

Ecological symbiosis. Sheep and particularly goats have long been connected with overgrazing in the sheepman versus cattleman folklore of the American West. Recent researches, however, indicate that overgrazing usually occurs when nomadic groups are *forced to settle down* and their flocks become trapped in specific localities.

"In analyzing cases of such damage around the world, one can see that too many animals are kept too long at one spot because the population are sedentary. As government actions are impinging on the range and style of the traditional nomad, the lessons of the recent past should be remembered."* Competition with older sedentary populations also complicates competition for land with struggles for regional political power.

In northern Afghanistan, the *maldar* and their flocks are still mobile, and serve as the perpetuators of marginal grasslands. As they move from one hillside grassland to another, sheep and goats do not overgraze, but in reality deposit tons of fertilizing manure. Withdraw this natural fertilizer from the marginal grasslands, and soil banks which have existed for centuries become unsupported semideserts or deserts. Force the nomads to settle in specific valley grasslands, usually their *qishlaq*, as happened during the grandiose Soviet scheme to make Kazakhstan bloom, and their flocks will not only overgraze, but as a result of the ecological disruptions, die out.

In spite of this and other examples of the disastrous effect of man's interference with specific cultural-ecological symbiotic patterns, well-meaning advisers—American, Russian, UNDP,

Film Dialogue

Only God knows how many people are landless . . . wandering hungry and thirsty.

M.I.K.

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*Farvar, M.T. and J.P. Milton (eds.). *The Careless Technology*, Natural History Press, 1972.

A lorry arrives in Aq Kupruk.

along with foreign-trained Afghans—having learned no lessons from the experience of others, recommend settling the nomads. Hopefully, saner heads will prevail and permit the continued logical evolution from nomadism to seminomadism and eventually to semisedentarism. (Apparently no group has become completely sedentary.) This is not to say that intelligently conceived and implemented programs to supplement land reclamation, as well as improved agricultural practices, could not benefit both villagers and *maldar*.

Drought is an environmental factor that has accelerated settlement among the *maldar*, at times dramatically, because of the loss of livestock. The droughts of 1970-71 wiped out a large portion of the Mohmand's flocks which usually grazed in the central mountains. Fortunately, the Mohmand of Ismail Khan and their flocks were able to move back across the Siah Band early both years (June), and stayed constantly on the move, returning to the *qishlaq* by August 1. In spite of this, they lost about 20 per cent of their sheep and goats. Many sedentary and nonsedentary peoples in the regions most affected by drought lost as much as 90 per cent of their flocks, often through a combination of selling at high prices to speculators from Kabul early in the drought and then being forced to eat the rest to survive.

Among those hardest hit by the droughts were some smaller groups who lost their entire flocks and either attached themselves to larger groups as *hamsaya* (clients) or hired themselves out as shepherds. While many of these nomads have been forced at least temporarily to settle, evidence now clearly indicates that nomads settle down only if they have lost their flocks; and even then, they

Film Dialogue

God has been kind to me. I have four sons.
One looks after his sheep . . .
. . . the others work with me . . .
. . . and sometimes with other people.

M.I.K.

usually prefer to work for others as shepherds—or seasonal agricultural laborers—in the hope of earning enough money to buy a small herd to begin again, rather than settling on a farm. At the other extreme, wealthy *maldar* may own land (and even buy tractors) and eventually build *qalah* (fortress-type, walled compounds) in the *qishlaq*, but will make the annual trek as long as they are physically able.

An interesting sidelight to the drought disaster was that several nonsedentary groups bought or hired lorries to move at least part of their flocks to search for grass outside the affected areas. The pattern is not totally new, because as early as the late 1950s, some nomads had purchased lorries which they used to transport goods during the off-movement seasons to supplement their incomes. Then, during times of migration, they moved some heavy baggage, older people, and young children by lorry along the main roads to points near their *yilaq*. This is still rare, however; motor vehicle traffic is precluded by migration routes through the central mountains and by the seasonal floods.

The post-World War II road network has made it possible for trucks to transport most agricultural and nonagricultural items sold in town bazaars and in the countryside zones of relatively easy accessibility. As the road network improved, the Afghan government encouraged the nonsedentary caravaneers (now obsolete along the main roads) to buy trucks and continue hauling goods, but in motor vehicles rather than on camels. As a result, many trucking and transport companies are owned by wealthy *maldar* khans.

Sociopolitical patterns. Forced migrations to the north in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries brought about shifts in social and political patterns that still affect nomad-villager relations. Initially the government granted land to many of the groups forced north and encouraged others to migrate voluntarily. Many were farmers, but most transplanted *maldar* preferred to continue their nomadic existence, although a few did adopt seminomadism.

The nonsedentary migrants caused changes in the villages through which they passed, made accommodations with other *maldar* as they sought to establish rights to summer pasturelands and reached arrangements with villages adjacent to their winter quarters. Often the adjustments were violent, and some of the feuds engendered then occasionally flare up today. Enmities still exist with the Uzbak, Tajik, and Hazara, who owned much of the land granted to the *maldar*.

Tribal, feudal warfare in Afghanistan has many positive functions, unlike depersonalized, sophisticated civilized warfare with its potential for mass murder. Students of violence often ignore the relationship between leisure time and warfare in the ecological cycle of past and present peasant-tribal societies:

> The link between Norman warfare and Victorian foxhunting is perfect.... Look at the Norman myths about legendary figures like the Angevin kings. From William the Conqueror to Henry the Third, they indulged in warfare seasonally. The season came around, and off they went in splendid armour which reduced the risk of injury to a foxhunter's minimum. Look at the decisive battle of Brenneville in which a field of 900 knights took part, and only three were killed.*

In nonliterate societies (and literate as well?), tensions within the group account for much external aggression. During the peak agricultural season, or when nomads are on the move, everyone is busy. In spite of this, tensions rise within the group, but work tends to sublimate the incipient violence; in fact, such tensions may actually *increase* the work rate by diverting energy to the task at hand. Often, intense rivalries spring up between brothers and male cousins, who are always real or potential rivals for the hands of the limited number of female cousins. Even the term for intense hatred in Pashto is *tuburghanay*, derived from the root *tubur*, cousin. (However, since most Pushtun cannot read or write, they deny any connection between the two words.)

On the off-economic seasons, long hours of boredom can result in violence. Folktales can be told and folksongs can be sung only so many times; working gear can be repaired for only so long. No movies exist in the countryside, nor do friendly neighborhood bars. The transistor radio grows boring. Suppressed violence needs an outlet. How much better for group survival if this violence can be channeled away from the camp or village, in a process of externalizing internal aggressions. Relatively few people are killed in feudal warfare, and the safety valve aspect cannot be underestimated. Group unity, threatened by personal violence, is maintained, and the bored human mind has an outlet for its passions.

Shifts in marriage patterns both promote evolution away from nomadism and reflect the changes that have occurred. The preferred female mate in Afghan society is the father's brother's daughter, or as near that relationship as possible, or the father's brother's son. Only a limited number of brides and grooms were available in the groups sent north, so prospective bridegrooms (or their go-betweens, *wasta*) periodically returned to the land of their fathers south of the Hindu Kush in search of marriageable relatives. The southerners, however, were reluctant to give daughters to men, no matter how close the blood ties, who lived literally hundreds of miles from their hearths. Links of rights and obligations, locally valid and functioning, were broken; and often the bride-seekers returned north without brides. Very quickly the Pushtun and Baluch eligible males began to take non-Pushtun or non-Baluch wives, particularly Tajik and Uzbak. Rarely—if ever—did a Pushtun woman marry a non-Pushtun. This mild miscegenation affected the political patterns between them.

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*T.H. White, *The Once and Future King*, Dell Printing, December 1964, p. 235.

Initially, the Pushtun and Baluch groups held *jirgah* (Pashto term for camp or village council) separate from the local *majlis* (term used in north). Gradually, however, joint sessions were held to discuss water rights and distribution, and to settle local disputes over grazing, women, etc. The Pushtun dominated the proceedings, and by the civil war of 1928-29, Pushtun dominance in most of the Turkestan plains and foothills was accepted. Pushtun elements dominated the first 11 Parliaments after the 1931 Constitution; theoretically elected, they were actually appointed by the government. A challenge to this dominance arose during the constitutional period from 1964-1973, and the two elections held in 1965 and 1969 saw a rise in the number of non-Pushtun representatives sent to Parliament from the north. A close look at developments in the village and regional power structures will help to explain this decline in *maldar* political strength.

Main street in Aq Kupruk.

Aq Kupruk and the Afghan Government

The geographic location of Aq Kupruk made it an important commercial and political center on the main north-south route of northern Afghanistan for centuries. The trail along the Balkh River leads from old Balkh—the ancient Bactra, called the Mother of Towns—to Bamiyan, another well-known religious and commercial center of the Kushan (Buddhist) period. The seminomadic peoples still traveling these old routes, over terrain unsuited for motor traffic, have benefitted Aq Kupruk's political status.

But the town was demoted by a 1961 administrative shift. Buina Qara, renamed Sholgara, became capital of a subprovince (Wolus Wali) of the same name and Aq Kupruk became center of the district.

In 1964, a complete overhaul of the administrative system of Afghanistan occurred, creating 28 new provinces in an attempt to decentralize and speed up economic and political development. The provinces varied greatly in size; the more accessible the area to roads and telecommunications, the smaller the province. Geographic regions with forbidding zones of relative inaccessibility were the largest and least populous. Both Aq Kupruk and Sholgara remained in the shrunken Balkh Province (formerly called Mazar-i-Sharif Province) after the realignment, but in 1972 the district governor's staff no longer had a judge. It consisted of six police plus a commandant, a tax collector, a statistician-clerk, a telephone operator, and a battery-powered telephone.

Subprovincial and district governors have controlled their administrative units with few checks from the center. Often, they act like little tyrants, frustrated because they were away from Kabul (or other urban centers). For example, in 1962 the people of Aq Kupruk genuinely hated the district governor (*alakadar*), a Mohammadzai (lineage of the former royal family) Durrani Pushtun. He had the Pushtun's classic contempt for all non-Pushtun, and slapped around anyone who displeased him. He would sit by the window of his office and fire his pistol across the river to frighten the villagers.

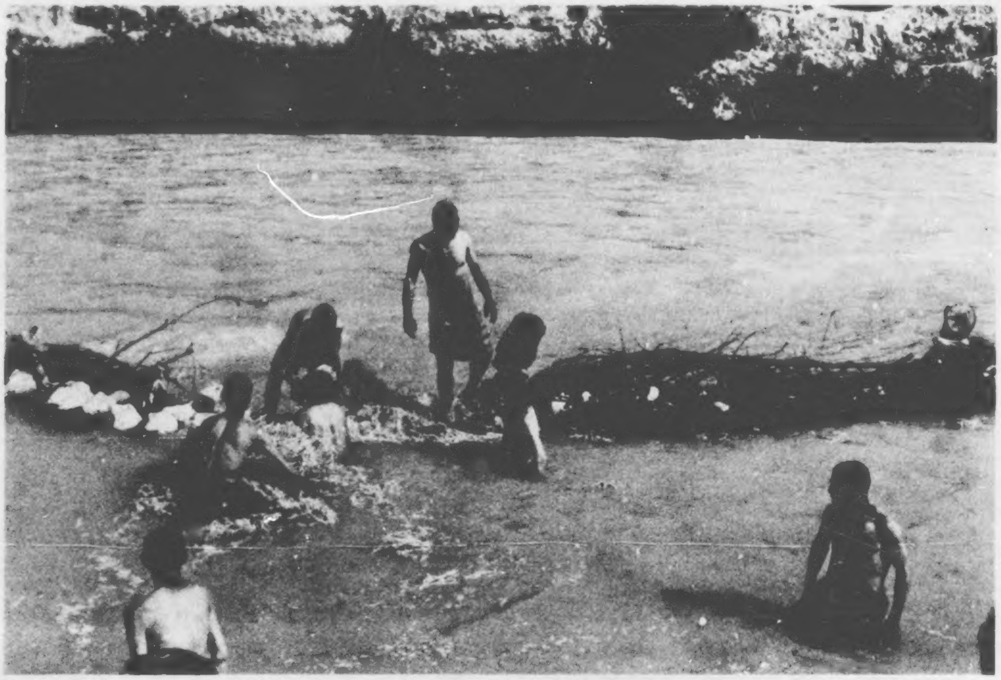
In 1965 Aq Kupruk's *alakadar*, whom people liked, decided to have a three-day Jeshn (Independence Day Festival) but was opposed by his Pushtun police commandant on the grounds that his five-man police force could not control large crowds. The *alakadar* held the long celebration, which was without incident, and gained in popularity.

The *alakadar* in 1972 was almost a carbon copy of the 1962 version. He held the local people in contempt, and his constantly flaring temper always meant boxed ears. He was a Durrani Pushtun of the Barakzai subtribe and had been in government since graduating from high school. Though he had traveled only as far as Peshawar outside Afghanistan, he had served as *alakadar* in the provinces of Kandahar, Taliqan, Uruzgan, Kunduz, Ghazni, Paktya, Ningrahar, Laghman, Baghlan, and Samangan. His family lived in Mazar-i-Sharif and in 1972 visited him almost every week on Friday. His office hours were quite flexible, usually from about 9 A.M. to 1 P.M. in the summer, and he held court under two large chenar trees high over the river bank. The *alakadar* had been in Aq Kupruk only eight months as of August 1972, and he was hoping for an early transfer. The people of Aq Kupruk shared this hope.

The Village Power Structure

Distrust of the central government is thus one traditional characteristic of political attitudes in Aq Kupruk. In fact, villagers are fundamentally noncooperative creatures outside of their own immediate kin groups. They will build farm-to-market roads and bridges, or improve regionally oriented irrigation systems if forced to do so by the government or paid for labor rendered, either in kind or cash. Only those who benefit directly will help with the annual cleaning and repairing of main canals on either side of the river. Seldom can villagers be persuaded to work for what to them is an abstract goal, which may be beneficial only for future generations. They want to benefit *now*. The town's loose-knit power structure works to perpetuate this noncooperation while keeping the central government from interfering.

The headman in Aq Kupruk is called *qaryahdar*.* Theoretically, he is elected every three years, but approval by the central government is mandatory and this limits the number of potential candidates. By local tradition, a Tajik usually—though not always—alternates with an Uzbak. The headman is the main link between the people of Aq Kupruk and government officials, as well as with outsiders who come into the area. Assisting the *qaryahdar* are the "ward leaders," usually referred to as *arbob*, all influential men in their physical prime (40s-50s), informally accepted by various sections of the village. Four of the seven *arbob* in 1972 had been previously elected *qaryahdah*. Their power is based on personal wealth (land, livestock, shops, and, increasingly important, cash to



Annual repair and clearing of canal feeding mill alongside Balkh River.

*In other parts of Afghanistan, the common term is *malik*.

lend) and charisma. The number of *arbob* varies from time to time for a strong man may not have a strong son or relative to replace him, and his family and group may gravitate under the political wing of another *arbob*. The *arbob* represent their immediate relatives and neighbors and often accompany the *qaryahdar* to government offices if the matter under consideration involves their "wards."

The people of Aq Kupruk recognize an informal *majlis-i-rish-i-safidan* (literally the terms mean "white beards") consisting of four Saadat elders to whom they take problems concerning land or water disputes, debt repayment, family squabbles, and other disagreements which they wish to hide from the government. In fact, the ideal is to prevent government involvement in all but serious outrages which threaten to disrupt the group, such as murders and reneging on large debts.

Another recent village institution is the "gang," loosely referred to as *muzdur* (workers, or a work group), led by a *dawaq*. Several such gangs exist in Aq Kupruk, rivaling the influence of the "white beards." This new political manifestation began to take form during the mid-1950s, when the Afghan military,* as part of its modernization process, reached farther afield to draft young men. Young villagers were also influenced by the government while participating in large-scale development projects and while attending secular schools, which dangled new ideas and aspirations before them.

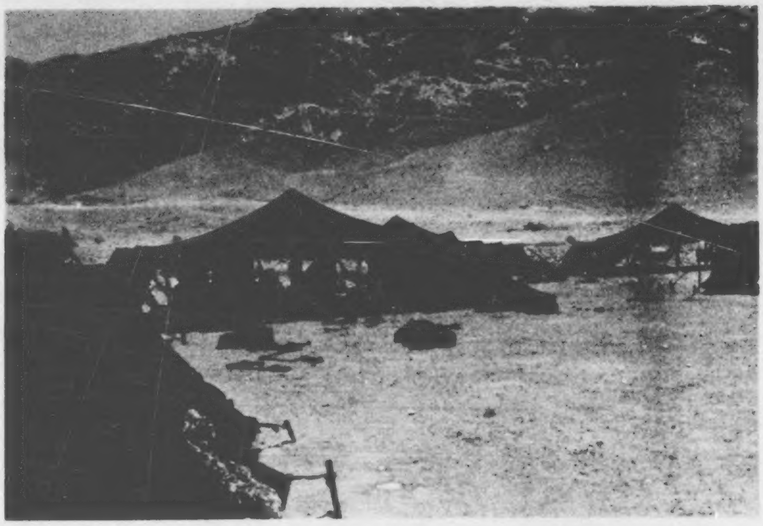
The *dawaq* are consulted informally by the *qarayahdar* and the *arbob* when special work (like cleaning and repairing the canal) is to be done, and they bring their gangs together to help out.

In the 1965 and 1969 elections, the various "gangs" began to show their strengths and supported the winning candidates. In 1965, a Pushtun from Kishindi was elected *wakil* (representative to the *Wolesi Jirgah*, Lower House of Parliament); a Pushtun from Mazar-i-Sharif became Senator for Balkh Province to the *Meshrano Jirgah*, Upper House. In 1969, however, an Uzbak from Sholgara became became *wakil*; and a Tajik from Balkh, Senator. The true local power elite began to emerge from behind the mud curtain. When elections are held under the Republic's new constitution, the gangs, in association with the rising urban middle class, may continue to shift local power away from its traditional, kin-oriented base, but opposition will be stiffer than ever as the rural establishment feels itself threatened.

The Maldar and the Government

What does this shift toward government influence in the villages mean for the *maldar*? It could bring tighter organization to the towns than the present kin-based structures allow, and thus provide more formidable opposition to the nomadic peoples on certain important issues. Experience has shown, for example, that when villagers have strong local organizations under equally strong leaders, they can force the *maldar* to shift their migration routes. Such an incident occurred west of Ghazni in the eastern Hazarajat in 1972. A group of Pushtun nomads paid 20,000

*The Afghan army, air force, police, gendarmerie, and labor corps essentially consist of conscripts.



The *maldar* camp.

afghanis for grazing rights on the hilly meadows west of an Hazara village. As the flocks of the sedentary Hazara grew, the local populace decided to reclaim the meadows. The *majlis* (council) collected afghanis 20,000, gave it to the *maldar* and asked them to find other grazing lands. The nomad group at first refused, but left after a show of armed force by the Hazara and a short skirmish in which one *maldar* was wounded in the leg.

As marginal grasslands in the north were put under the plow by modest government-supported irrigation programs, *maldar* often returned from their summer pastures (*yilaq*) to find their *qishlaq* occupied by newly arrived villagers. Unlike the nomadic tribes of the Zagros in Iran, Afghan nomads had traditional rather than legal grazing rights, often gained through warfare with other nomadic groups.

In the past, when violence erupted between nomad and villager for control of the land, the government often used the army to support the villagers. The nomads, therefore, moved back deeper into the foothills and established new winter quarters. The more far-sighted khans asked the government for permission to farm part of the *qishlaq*, and the government usually sold—or gave—title to the land. These groups began to develop into seminomads, and, initially, only a small group remained behind in spring and summer. Thus part of the *qishlaq* was saved as pastureland, and the group became economically more diversified.

In their *yilaq* area in the Siah Band, the Mohmand Pushtun of Mohammad Ismail Khan are also facing economic pressure from nearby Aimaq villagers. Several Aimaq, high in the power elite, own the high valley pasturelands used by the Mohmand Durrani, and Turkoman *maldar* groups, each of whom pays specific amounts in return for rights to pasture. In recent years, the Durrani have been purchasing title to the grasslands from the resident Aimaq owners, who wanted cash at once, instead of the annual payments; this process is tending to stabilize a previously explosive situation.

Film Dialogue

Look Brother . . .
. . . those in power sell good lands . . .
to those who work for them.
Some men own 1,000 acres or more . . .
while others have nothing.

M.I.K.

Film Dialogue

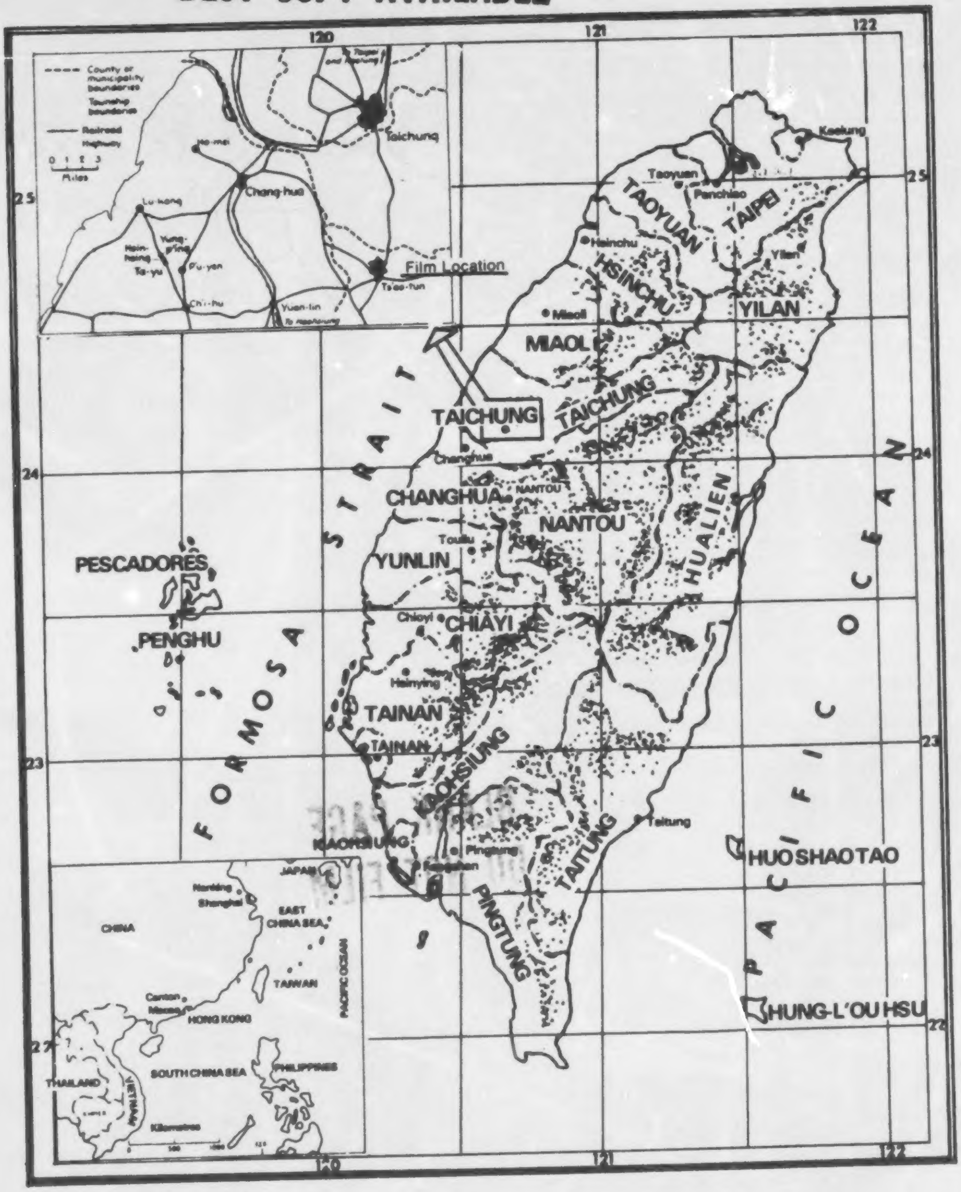
Those who have land and can make a decent living . . .
. . . should send their sons and daughters to school,
The children . . .
. . . at least would come to know themselves.
To learn to read, write and think . . .
will make them . . .
. . . better human beings.

M.I.K.

Competition between the *maldar* and Aimaq for the mid-range grazing lands (between the high valley pastures and the lower valley *lalmi*) continue, however, and the boundaries fluctuate with the amount of annual rainfall; the more the precipitation, the higher the *lalmi* crops can be grown. The Mohmand, not owning grasslands yet, now look on the Durrani and Turkoman, rather than the sedentary Aimaq, as their chief competitors.

The Mohmand, Durrani, and Turkoman *maldar* are stronger groups than the Aimaq villagers, whose headmen nevertheless adroitly play the three seminomadic tribes one against the other. Violence does occur—usually over women, livestock rustling, and enfringement of *maldar* sheep and goats in the villager's wheat fields but before the *maldar* depart in July, a joint *jirgah* composed of leaders from all four groups attempts to settle any outstanding problems.

As Ismail Khan has said, the Mohmand and most other *maldar* want to continue their way of life. They want to keep their flocks and their land as well, but in the future this will probably require an increased cooperation with the local and centralized governments of the sedentary peoples of Afghanistan. Two of the Khan's four sons attend school in Sholgara during the winter months, and their father hopes they will enter government service. If they do, they may some day be able to influence government decisions affecting their people, and give future generations a chance to adapt their mobile life styles to the changing symbiotic pattern of Afghan culture.



County or municipality boundaries
Township boundaries
Railroad
Highway
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Miles
Taichung
Chang-hua
Lu-kang
Yung-p'ing
Hsin-kang
Ta-yu
P'u-yen
Chi-hu
Yuan-lin
Ts'ao-tun
Film Location
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TAOYUAN
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TAIWAN

1

Rural Society

PEOPLE ARE MANY, FIELDS ARE SMALL

by BERNARD GALLIN

The Island of Taiwan* lies astride the Tropic of Cancer in the East China Sea, some 100 miles off the coast of China. Traditionally, Taiwan and China shared common social and political institutions that were reflections of their agrarian-based societies in which commerce and industry played only a small role. In the last two and a half decades, however, Taiwan (the Republic of China) and the People's Republic of China have drifted apart, each taking different roads to development.

Taiwan today is facing some critical choices for its future development. Agricultural policies are central to economic planning and have significant implications in the social and political realm as well. High farm productivity must be maintained or even increased. Food is needed to feed an increasingly nonagriculturally productive population and capital is needed to subsidize increasing industrialization. Neither food nor capital, however, can continue to be extracted from an agricultural system based on a traditional technology. Moreover, cultivators will continue to give up working the land if their profits remain low. Despite the remarkable record of Taiwan's economic achievements, therefore, agriculture in Taiwan—particularly the cultivation of rice, the island's single, most important food crop—is and has been in a state of near crisis for several years.

The purpose of this essay is to examine the developmental road that Taiwan has taken in order to bring itself into the modern world as a viable, national entity. First, we will discuss Taiwan's history focusing on the policies and programs of the governments that have ruled the island since the 1600s. Then, we will examine the ways in which these phenomena have effected economic and social change on the island. Finally, we will consider the significance of these changes for Taiwan's future.

Historical Background

Most of Taiwan's 16 million people are Chinese who emigrated from the mainland during two periods: the several hundred years between the late 1600s and 1900, and the few years following the end of World War II in 1945 and the defeat of the Nationalists by the Communists on the Chinese mainland in 1949. Approximately 85 per cent are Taiwanese, descendants of immigrants from the southeastern provinces of China—particularly Fukien province—who came to the island during the first period of migration. The remaining 15 per cent are primarily mainlander Chinese—and their offspring—who came to the island in the late 1940s and a small group of Malayo-Polynesian-speaking aborigines.

NOTES ON THE CHINESE FARMER

Historically, he has demonstrated great skill in adapting his farm techniques to different, often difficult, environments.

Some of the earliest innovations in irrigation, plant breeding, and wet rice agriculture were developed in China.

Nearly 60 per cent of mankind depend upon rice as their staple food.

Taiwan, as an island, is limited to 2.2 million acres of farm land.

Since land reform two decades ago, the average family holding is 2.5 acres.

Taiwan farmers must feed over 15 million people.

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*Known also as Formosa; Formosa is the Portuguese, Taiwan the Chinese name for the island.

During the early 1600s, the island was developed and governed intermittently by the Japanese and Europeans, particularly by the Dutch, who were firmly based in Java. At that time, it was sparsely populated by aborigines and small numbers of Chinese fishermen, farmers, and pirates. The first large wave of Chinese immigration began in 1683 after Taiwan officially came under the hegemony of the Chinese government when it defeated General Koxinga (Ch'eng Cheng-kung) and his troops who had fled to the island from the Manchu forces of the new Ch'ing dynasty.

For the next 200 years it was ruled by the Chinese government on the mainland, primarily as a dependency of the coastal province of Fukien. During most of these years, the Chinese government paid only limited attention to the development of the island's economy, and, perhaps as a result, the population rebelled a number of times. Taiwan's precarious stability frequently was disrupted by internal clan fights, banditry, and skirmishes between the Chinese and aborigines.

It was not until the end of the Sino-Japanese war of 1895 and the arrival of the Japanese colonial government that order was established on the island and considerable developmental progress made there. The Japanese government wanted Taiwan to serve as a rice basket and market for their homeland and embarked on a program to establish the stability necessary for successful economic development. The aborigines were pacified and banditry and clan warfare ended. Railroads and other communication networks were established and wide-scale health programs were introduced. Commercial agriculture, particularly in sugar cane, was fostered and a number of large-scale irrigation systems were built to enable a major increase in wet rice production.

Rice fields arranged for maximum use of the land.

Many fields are still plowed by buffalo.

While these developments did bring an improved standard of living to the rural area, most of the Japanese programs were instituted in the urban areas of Taiwan. It was there, for example, that educational facilities were first expanded, although primarily at the grade school level.* The Japanese government showed little desire to treat the people of the island as equals and, in fact, initially attempted to prevent fundamental changes in the Chinese culture. Thus they did little to alter the traditional Chinese social system which facilitated the maintenance of social control.

Only in the 1930s, when the Japanese saw that a major war was imminent and that the support of the colonial area was essential, did they attempt to "Japanize" the island, mainly through education. Chinese elements in the public school curriculum were reduced and a Japanese "patriotic emphasis" increased. The object was to (1) decrease the Taiwanese feelings of relationship with their Chinese origins; and (2) encourage Taiwanese support for their Japanese "compatriots" and the Japanese "co-prosperity sphere." In addition, education was made more readily available to the local population, including that in the rural area. Specialized technical and commercial middle schools and colleges were developed, and schools of medicine, law, and economics were opened in both Taiwan and Japan to the Taiwanese.

As a result, by 1944, 70 per cent of the Formosan Chinese were literate in Japanese.** The highly educated Taiwanese, when "given a simple choice between 'backward China' and 'progressive Japan'...was strongly inclined to think of himself and his family's future in Japanese terms, or at least within the Japanese empire frame of reference."*** Nevertheless, to Formosans, such as the people of Tsao Tun township, Japanese colonialism meant subjugation by a distant and alien government and by a harsh master.

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*See Appleton, Sheldon, *They Call Him Ah Kung: Education in Taiwan,* film essay, *Faces of Change,* American Universities Field Staff, 1976.

**Douglas Mendel, in his *The Politics of Formosan Nationalism,* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970, p. 21, provides the 70 per cent literacy figure. If this 1944 figure for literacy in the Japanese language is correct, it undoubtedly represents a much higher than 70 per cent literacy in the urban areas of Taiwan, and a much lower per cent in rural villages.

***Kerr, George H. *Formosa: Licensed Revolution and the Home Rule Movement, 1895-1945;* Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1974.

The defeat of Japan at the end of World War II again brought Taiwan under Chinese rule. During the "Restoration," as the change in regime is known, the Nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek sent troops, under the leadership of General Chen Yi, to "liberate" the island. Most Taiwanese were ready and eager for the island to join the Republic of China as a province. They saw this incorporation as "a union with their own race." The educated among them, some of whom had returned from Japan, fully expected that Taiwan would be governed by Taiwanese as part of China. This was not to be. The Mainlanders considered Taiwan as war booty and as a rice basket for the mainland.

When Governor Chen Yi, the first province head, began his rule of Taiwan, the island and its people were treated as an occupied and backward area. The ragged, undisciplined soldiers of the "liberating army" abused the local population. "Carpetbaggers" from the mainland swarmed to Taiwan to exploit the island's instability. The war-damaged economy, although far more productive than that of the mainland, deteriorated rapidly, in part as a result of the loss of Japan as a trading partner. In addition, cholera and malaria, both of which had been virtually eliminated under Japanese rule, became epidemic and a major threat to life.

By 1947, the initial expectations of the Taiwanese had been shattered and they attempted to rebel against their new "masters." In quelling the rebellion, the Nationalists massacred an estimated 20,000 Taiwanese. A large number of these dead were the more educated members of the population who previously had expected to become the new leaders of Taiwan.

If any hope for Taiwanese leadership still existed after order was restored, it dissipated when the collapse of the Nationalist government on the Chinese mainland in 1949 brought an influx of about one million refugees to the island. Many of these people were military men, businessmen, and educators, but many also were government personnel who came to the island to rule when the Nationalist government established itself on Taiwan, with Taipei as its capital.

The change in location of the Chinese government was accompanied by changes in its attitude toward and treatment of the people and problems of Taiwan. The Nationalists' primary objective was the recovery of the mainland—Taiwan was the base from which this action was to be launched—and they initiated a series of programs to strengthen the island militarily, politically, and economically. At the outset, many of these programs were concentrated in the military and education spheres; the allegiance and support of the Taiwanese population was necessary for the success of the military operation.* Gradually, however, the government began to develop programs to ameliorate Taiwan's economic problems. A major force behind these development efforts was the United States, particularly after the Korean War began and after it

*This changing position in the government policies toward Taiwan bears a striking similarity to those adopted by the Japanese during the war period in the 1930s and early 1940s.

became involved in Vietnam.* During the 1950s, then, the Nationalist government began to institute various programs to develop the agricultural and industrial sectors of the island. In order to better understand the effects of these programs in townships such as Tsao-Tun, we must first examine the sociopolitical and economic context.

The Chinese Sociopolitical and Economic Systems

Until very recently Taiwan was a predominantly agrarian and peasant society. As such, participation in the economic system is oriented toward the social and ritualistic demands of and obligations to a person's kinship group and local community and area. Thus a peasant society can never be seen as an isolate or entity unto itself. It is inextricably linked to and a part of a larger system ruled by the state.

In Taiwan the state penetrated and manipulated the agricultural economy for its own political ends. The economy of the nation, as well as the personal needs of the ruling elite, depended upon and had to be met by the agrarian sector. Much of its agricultural surplus—extracted through taxes, usually in kind—went to satisfy the requirements of the larger society.

In order to operate and maintain such a system throughout its territory, the state relied upon a large governmental bureaucracy and local sociocultural institutions. This arrangement was reflected in the class system that existed in pre-Communist China and on Taiwan. The major portion of the population consisted of a subordinate class of agrarian-based peasants who cultivated the land as small landowners, tenants—or a combination of both—and laborers who had no rights to land. A much smaller superordinate class consisted of an elite core of highly educated, literate government officials and influential people, often referred to as gentry. Since land traditionally was the safest kind of an investment and its accumulation the primary means of achieving status and power, their wealth usually was based on large landholdings. Some were also involved in the world of business, and they usually resided in urban centers. However, many of the gentry or members of their families, not in official government positions, resided in the rural areas.

These latter people played a major leadership role in the villages and surrounding area. Until very recently, China's political system was one of relative local autonomy and the government handled problems through the resident gentry rather than by dealing directly with the peasants. Consequently, if the peasantry was to get along successfully with the government they had to work through the gentry, whom they selected to handle local affairs and to represent their interests in dealing with the authorities.

This arrangement was to the gentry's distinct advantage. As the official leaders, they wielded greater power by which they could

*The Americans saw Taiwan as an important staging area for the United States' war efforts. In addition, they jointly agreed with the Nationalist Chinese that Taiwan should become the "showcase" of Asia.

more easily manipulate the peasantry, and even the tax collector. In addition, recognition as a leader by the peasants and by the authorities also increased their prestige.

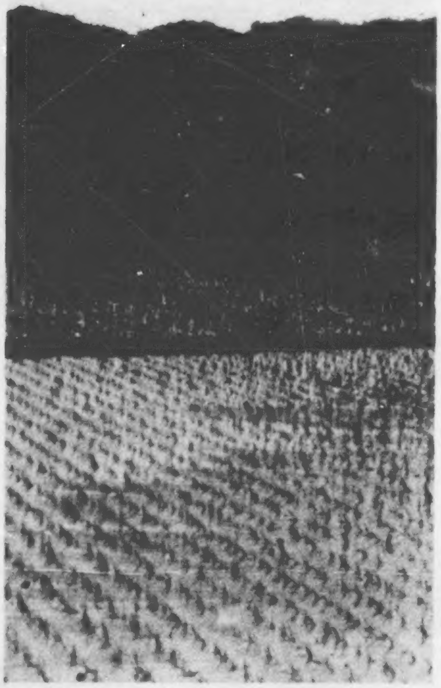
Although traditionally there was probably a great deal of antagonism underlying this system, conflict was kept submerged because (1) firm, impersonal guarantees of security were relatively absent, and (2) those who made these arrangements had the means and power to do so. The gentry were the only mediators between the peasantry and the state; they controlled large tracts of land which they arbitrarily leased to tenants at oppressively heavy rents; and they were the main source of credit and loans for peasants who had little to offer as security.

Sociocultural patterns and values served to preserve the status quo. Among the most important was the Chinese kinship system, based on patrilineal common descent groups, called *tsu*. The membership of these organizations frequently was characterized by social differentiation; each included some well-to-do gentry and a mass of poor cultivators. The *tsu* performed a number of activities which helped to provide group solidarity and insure its members' identification and loyalty.* They offered a substantial amount of security to their poorer members by institutionalizing and reinforcing their relationships with those gentry to whom they were bound by consanguinal ties.

Other sociocultural organizations also linked the peasantry to power figures who were in a position to give security. Since family landholdings usually were small, cultivator families—tenant as well as peasant owners—frequently sent one or more members to the urban areas to earn needed cash. In the city they frequently tended to join regional, linguistic, or kinship-based associations in which they could establish relationships with more influential members of the society. (Generally, even the scholar-officials who lived in urban areas continued to identify with people from and in their rural villages by maintaining relationships through such associations and by maintaining land and ties with kinsmen in their natal areas.) In return for the helpful benefits the gentry gave them, the migrant-peasant offered loyalty and personal assistance.

Finally, the peasant-agrarian system was preserved by the Great Tradition of China. This tradition consists of a set of values and beliefs which have been transmitted as ideals of behavior by means of the writings of Confucius and other literary and folk works. The languages (commonly called dialects) of China are many, but they are all scribed in a single, highly symbolic, nonphonetic system of written characters. The use of the single writing system by each Chinese language group has facilitated the transmission of these sociocultural ideas across class lines. Together they reinforced the mutually supportive but unequal relationships existing between the differentiated levels of the Chinese/Taiwanese population and legitimated the intrusive role of the state in the rural society.

Planting rice seedlings.



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*For further discussion of this subject see Gallin, 1966: 127-137, 169-175.

The Nationalist government, then, once settled on Taiwan, found itself faced with a sociopolitical and economic situation similar to that which had existed on the mainland. A small core of elite controlled large concentrations of land and the lives of a mass of small cultivators and tenants. The government thus instituted a land reform program in line with past promises and scattered attempts at reform on the mainland. Between 1949 and 1953 the Nationalist government instituted a series of laws which first reduced tenant rents to 37.5 per cent of the annual main crop and, through government-regulated rental contracts, protected the tenant against arbitrary eviction. The program culminated with the "Land to the Tiller Act" which gave the government the authority to expropriate, with compensation, part of the land of the landlords and sell it to former tenants on an installment arrangement whereby payments were spread over a ten-year period.*

The landlords did not receive cash payments for their expropriated land. Rather, the purchase price fixed by the government was 250 per cent of the total annual main crop yield. Of this proportion, 70 per cent was paid to the landlords in land bonds and 30 per cent in stock shares. These stock shares were in enterprises such as paper, mining, and cement, which had been taken over from the Japanese after the war. The land bonds held by the former landlords were redeemed in kind, in a series of two semiannual installments. The bonds could be sold on the open market or used as security in financial matters.

A major goal of the land reform program, of course, was to improve the land tenure system so as to increase agricultural productivity. (It had been expected that the ownership of land and/or the reduced cost of renting land, would encourage peasants to farm more effectively and thus increase yields.) The government, however, engaged in other efforts to increase productivity, particularly of rice. And nowhere were these efforts more evident than in the government's penetration into the Farmers' Associations.**

FILM LINK

The Farmers' Associations, first organized under the Japanese colonial government, include almost all villagers who cultivate land. The members, through an elected representative body, select a General Secretary to run their local Farmers' Association. However, both the county and provincial governments' agricultural departments supervise and control the activities and budgets of the local Associations.

Each individual Farmers' Association has three functions. The first, and perhaps the most important of its functions, is its extension services. Most extension services are performed with the financial and advisory cooperation of the Joint Commission on Rural

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*In large part, the success of this program was due to the fact that the government officials who developed and implemented it were not members of, related to, or dependent upon the Taiwanese elite or to the people whose land they expropriated. The program, in fact, served not only to relieve the serious tenancy situation in Taiwan, but also served to neutralize the influence of a group of potential political dissidents.

**For a more detailed discussion of Farmers' Associations see Gallin, 1966: 69-79.

Loans department of the Farmers' Association.

Reconstruction (JCRR), a quasi-government agency. These services include agricultural and technological instruction, sponsoring of Four-H clubs, provision of rental farm implements, providing cash subsidy and loans to members to encourage farm modernization, and sale to members of such items as seed, bean cake, and bicycles, often below the market price.

The second function of the Farmers' Association is money-lending. Loans are of two types: first, to cultivators by the Association itself, and second, to cultivators by the Provincial Food Bureau under the management of the Association. These loans, however, have been of little help in easing the credit situation of the small cultivator, since they often require too much security or are too small or for short-term periods. The result is that most peasants still resort to high-interest private moneylenders or to moneylending clubs.

The third function is performing, for a fee, some of the work of the Provincial Food Bureau. That is, the Farmers' Association is the agent through which the government collects rice for the land tax; rice which cultivators are forced to sell to the government at a price lower than the market price; and, until 1973, rice which they exchanged for chemical fertilizer. Thus the government virtually forced the peasant with padi land to grow rice: if a peasant substituted vegetables or some other cash crop he would have to buy rice on the market at a high price in order to fulfill his obligations to the government.

The government also has attempted to increase rice productivity by expanding the irrigation network built by the Japanese. Padi (or wet) rice, because rainfall is seasonal, demands the elaborate network of irrigation dams, water gates, and waterways that are organized and operated under the direction of the government. The agency in control, the Water Conservation Bureau, is subordinate to the provincial government's department of Civil Administration. The Water Conservation Association, whose membership consists of the many cultivators who use irrigation water, is under the official guidance of the Water Conservation Bureau. Theoretically, the Water Conservation Association and its membership operate and control the irrigation system, but actually—like the Farmers' Association—it is under the authority and direction of a government bureau.

The membership of the Association pays the expenses for the operation of the irrigation system. Although the money they pay is called "membership dues," the peasants refer to it and consider it to be a "water tax." Part of the money goes to the local Water Conservation Association to pay the salaries of hired workers and to maintain the irrigation system, and part of it goes to the Water Conservation Bureau as a kind of "water rights tax."

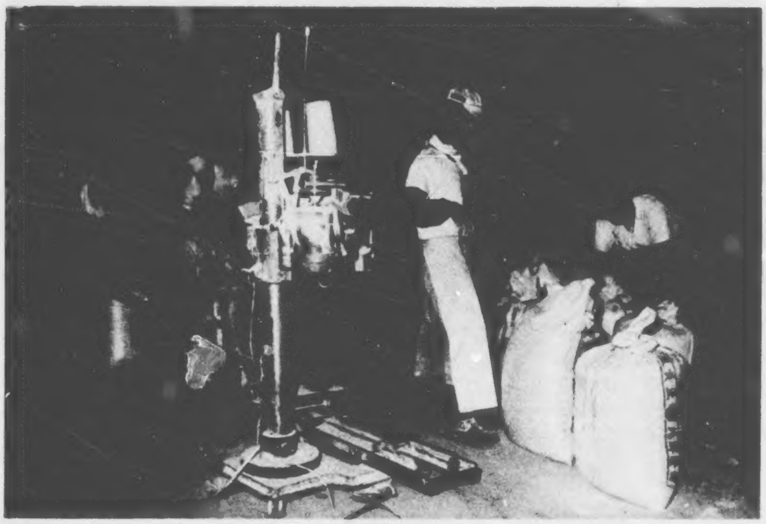
Increased Productivity in Agriculture

A major goal of all these programs—the land reform and the expansion of the Farmers' Associations and the irrigation networks—was to increase agricultural productivity so as to support an increasing number of people. Taiwan has only about 2.2 million acres of cultivated land and must provide for about 16 million people. While Japan has a similar ratio of about seven persons per cultivated acre, that nation is the world's greatest deficit food importer including feed grains, whereas Taiwan's imports are not much greater than exports. And Taiwan has the highest caloric intake on the average in Asia. This remarkably productive agriculture is accomplished with farms averaging one *chia* (about two and one-half acres) in size. Taiwan's present population density, in relation to land cultivated is more than twice that of Bangladesh or Java. However, the island's population has multiplied at least eightfold in a century. The question is how long this can continue.

By the late 1950s, the rate of population growth in Taiwan had reached a high of over 3.5 per cent per annum, and this rate did not begin to drop significantly until the late 1960s. This tremendous increase in population was a reflection of the great reduction in the death rate, which resulted, primarily, from the lower incidence of fatal diseases. The control of disease was effected by government public health programs, which helped eliminate diseases like cholera and malaria, an increase in the number of Western-style doctors, an increased reliance on Western medicine and medical techniques, and somewhat better sanitation as a result of education and the public and governmental enforcement of health standards.

The government, however, did not want to increase agricultural productivity just to feed the island's growing population. It also wanted to increase farm yields so that the island would produce a surplus to export to foreign markets for cash. The funds were necessary to finance its multilevel bureaucracy and national military establishment. Of no less importance, cash from agriculture was necessary to finance the industrialization of the island, particularly its urban areas.

What effect, then, have the above programs had on Taiwan? What impact have they had on the traditional Chinese/Taiwanese sociopolitical and economic systems? What is their meaning within the context of these five films?



Bags of rice are sewn up by hand at the mill.

Effects of the Chinese Nationalists' Developmental Programs

Industrial productivity in Taiwan has grown enormously over the last 20 years. Between the early 1950s and 1966, industrial productivity more than quadrupled and between 1960 and 1966, more than doubled.* During these same years, agricultural productivity increased by approximately 45 per cent. In the years since, although industrial productivity has continued to rise, agricultural productivity has not followed the same upward trend. In both 1969 and 1971, it fell below the 1966 base-line figure and during other years rose only slightly.

These differing growth rates are related to and reflect the development policies adopted by the Nationalist government. Industrial development has been financed (1) by capital extracted from the agricultural sector of the population; and (2) by foreign capital lured to the island by its relatively stable economic and political situation. It has been fueled by human capital drawn from the island's rural villages and smaller towns and cities.

Rural to urban migration, however, is hardly a new phenomenon in Taiwan. The proportion of Taiwanese living in cities rose from 10.5 per cent in 1929 to 15.2 per cent in 1950 to 24.4 per cent in

Industry of Free China, 1968: 54-55; Departments of Agriculture and Forestry, Taiwan Provincial Government, 1973: 30; and Departments of Agriculture and Forestry, Taiwan Provincial Government, 1973: 30.

1966.* Natural increase accounts for part of this growth, but migration has played the major role, for fertility rates are lower in the cities than in the countryside. As a result, fully one-third of the residents of the island's two largest cities as of 1956 were Taiwanese in-migrants; 33.6 and 33.9 per cent of the residents of Taipei and Kaohsiung, respectively, had been registered originally in some other locality in Taiwan.**

On the one hand, the rural to urban flow has been stimulated by conditions in the city such as employment opportunities in the businesses, factories, and service jobs which have burgeoned since the early stages of Taiwan's industrialization. On the other hand, the flow of rural inhabitants has been sustained by conditions in the countryside such as overpopulation, landlessness, family farms far too small to support all family members, and rural underemployment.

Migration and Land Reform

The land reform, of course, was designed to ameliorate some of these problems by improving the economy of rural Taiwan. In many ways it has been one of the most effective land reform efforts in Asia. It benefited cultivators who were able to obtain contract-controlled rentals and those who were able to purchase land from the government by means of installment payments. The program drastically reduced land rental rates and made available a good proportion of the land formerly in the hands of a few large landholders. But it could do little to increase arable acreage in an area whose population was already too large for the land it occupied. The result has been an exodus of population from the rural areas and from farming as an occupation.*** While there are many variations in the migration patterns, the major characteristic of the process is its selectivity. The more productive members of the rural population leave the area: the better educated to take up white-collar jobs or entrepreneurial activities in the cities; the less educated to fill unskilled jobs.

For example, beginning in the early 1950s, the Land Reform Act reduced the large landholders' income by controlling land rent, regulating tenancy agreements, and reducing their holdings by compensated expropriation. As a consequence this educated group has increasingly shifted and followed their capital to urban industry and business not normally found in rural areas. The shift in investment was partly a result of the lessened security of land ownership and the decreased profits to be gained from land rentals, and partly a consequence of the government's method of paying compensation for expropriated land in industrial stocks. Regardless, this social stratum, whose prestige and prosperity had been purely a function of large landholdings, came to realize that higher profits could be gained from other kinds of investments, that land ownership was not the only means to high social status, and left the rural areas.

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*Barclay, 1954-13; and Department of Civil Affairs, 1967:10.

**Chu, Hsien-yen, *An Exploratory Study of Internal Migration in Taiwan*, Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (University of Florida) 1966.

***Between 1963 and 1973, the household registration of those employed in agriculture dropped from 51.3 to 30.2 per cent, while industrial laborers in the total employed population rose from 22.6 to 35.9 per cent. Survey and Research Institute, Taiwan Provincial Labor Force, 1973:13. These figures probably underestimate the numbers of rural people who have given up farming to work in cities since many migrants continue to maintain their household registration in their home area.

During these same years many of the less educated rural population also began to leave the village in response to economic conditions. The land reform did benefit many cultivators, but it also created a relatively static land market. Expropriation removed a sizable proportion of arable land from the open market while the security and added prosperity brought to the peasant by the 1951 Rent Reduction Act had the effect of virtually removing any possibility of finding land to rent. In addition, the 37.5 per cent of the annual main crop which the tenants would pay was insufficient to tempt many owners to give up all effective control of their land by renting it. Even tenants were reluctant to give up a situation which brought them some profit and security, since they could no longer be summarily evicted at the landlord's convenience. As a result, it is extremely difficult to buy or rent additional land to keep pace with family growth and more and more villagers are leaving the land to find work in urban areas in order to supplement their family income.

Migration: "Push" and "Pull" Factors

Some former farm families live within commuting distance of industrial complexes and have taken up factory jobs near their villages. Many others, however, do not live within commuting distance of job opportunities and thus migrate to larger cities. Regardless, their exodus has left only a limited number of men in the rural area. This withdrawal of large numbers of men from the available pool of farm laborers, plus the law of supply and demand and general inflation, have worked to raise the cost of hiring farm labor.* For many cultivators, then, the increased cost of farm labor—along with the increased cost of fertilizer and other farm supplies—have lowered returns from their rice crops. (We mention rice specifically in this context since its price continues to be controlled by the government in Taiwan.) As a result, many peasants have virtually given up farming and migrated.

Soldiers must be brought in to help harvest the rice, due to a lack of farm laborers.

*Norma Diamond, "A Chinese Farm Wife," film essay, *Faces of Change*, American Universities Field Staff, 1976.

In sum, the high cost of farm operation, the relative inelasticity of farm profits, the pressure of too many people on too little land, and the limited opportunities for nonagricultural activities in the rural areas, all tend to "push" rural villagers to urban areas.

Rural-to-urban migration, however, also is stimulated by "pull" factors. The increased contact with urban areas (through both seasonal migration and relationships with "permanent migrants" affect the peasants' continuing commitment to agriculture and its accompanying styles. The visible contrast between the more immediate financial rewards garnered from nonagricultural activities and the delayed and lower financial reward gleaned from farming activities, causes cultivators to question the profitability or benefits of their own occupation. Reports of the higher standards of living and recreational or educational opportunities in the city also cause the peasants to redefine "the good life" and question the adequacy of their own life styles. As a result, many have become increasingly dissatisfied with the rural way of life and have been leaving the land for the perceived better opportunities offered by the city.

Migration and Agricultural Productivity

The impact of this stream of rural-to-urban migration in Taiwan has had significant effects on agricultural productivity. During the early 1950s and 1960s, most of these effects were positive. That is, migration alleviated the population pressures in areas suffering from underemployment, landlessness, and family farms too small to support all family members. Migration also helped to raise the standard of living in the rural areas through remittances sent home by workers in the city. By the late 1960s, however, many of these effects were negative. Once a state of "equilibrium" had been reached between the pressures of population and land scarcity on the one hand, and the annual numbers of out-migrants on the other, the flow of people from the rural area did not level off. Instead, the movement developed what we would call a "migration momentum" which transcended the original economic reasons and caused people to leave their homes because of relative, not absolute, deprivation.

Regardless of the reason for their migration, however, almost all the migrants have retained title to their land. Although it serves as a form of continuing security, farm productivity has been adversely affected by the resulting new patterns of land use, or disuse. For example, since the migration of the head of the household usually is followed by the remaining members of the family, land frequently is "loaned" to a brother or older relative to cultivate. These people do farm the land and do derive income from it. They do not, however, care for it as if it were their own. As a result, the fertility of some land in Taiwan is being depleted and farm productivity suffers. Farm productivity suffers even more directly, however, because some migrants simply make no arrangements for their land and allow it to lie fallow; there is, in fact, currently an estimated 15,000 hectares (about 36,000 acres) of land in Taiwan that has been taken out of cultivation.* Migration then, has left the rural area spotted with farm plots used only marginally or not at all.

Agricultural productivity also is deleteriously affected by the labor shortage. Migration has left villages heavily populated with the relatively unproductive members of the population: the very old, the very young, and the wives of migrant husbands, or of part-time cultivators. There are too few people who can be hired to satisfy the demands of the huge inputs of labor needed at various points of the rice crop cycle.

The Sociopolitical Implications

Migration also has affected the traditional Chinese/Taiwanese social and political systems. For example, the traditional forms of exchange labor between tenant families have begun to change as a result of the diversification of some villagers' occupations.** Many are increasingly unwilling to commit themselves and their time to fellow villagers, neighbors, or relatives since the time spent in such activity could interfere with their work in jobs or factories.

Most important, however, migration has affected the role of the village and kinship organizations that were previously the peasants' chief sources of identification and security. As the villagers have begun to extend their activities and interests beyond the village and the patrilineal common descent groups (*tsu*), their involvement with these groupings has decreased, although the *tsu* continue to perform many functions within the context of the village. In towns, the migrants seek to establish outside sources of solidarity and security, and the *tsu* is even further affected.

At the same time, as the former landlords increasingly have focused their economic interests elsewhere, their local social and political ties have weakened and they have abandoned their interests in the village. One consequence of their withdrawal from the rural scene is that the local area has been penetrated by political factions. These have accelerated the process of change in the organization of the local social system. The most significant aspect of this change is the further weakening of the *tsu* and village, the traditional modes of social solidarity.

Some of the attitudes which accompany these changes do, of course, have certain positive implications for development. Once industrialization has gotten under way, for example, a country needs individuals with attitudes that "fit" the demands of more or less modern production enterprises. These attitudinal changes, however, do not "fit" the demands of a traditional agricultural system, and Taiwan must continue to seek ways to restore balance.

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*From a public lecture by Professor Jack Williams, Department of Geography, Michigan State University, February 12, 1975.

**For a discussion of these exchange patterns, see Gallin, 1966: 64-69.

Conclusions

Taiwan's agrarian population has been going through a process of deagrarianization during the past two decades. Rural agriculturalists have become urban workers and peasants have become farmers. In the process, the very fabric of traditional Taiwanese society has been rent as former peasants gradually abandon their dependence on kinship and local relationships and become involved in socioeconomic activities and relationships outside their own locality.

Deagrarianization was never a conscious goal of the Nationalist government. It occurred nevertheless as an indirect result of government policies and programs which have adversely affected Taiwanese agriculture and its peasantry. Taiwan's leaders -- unlike the government of the People's Republic on the mainland—programmed it into existence by making industry the base and agriculture the prime factor for the development of the island.

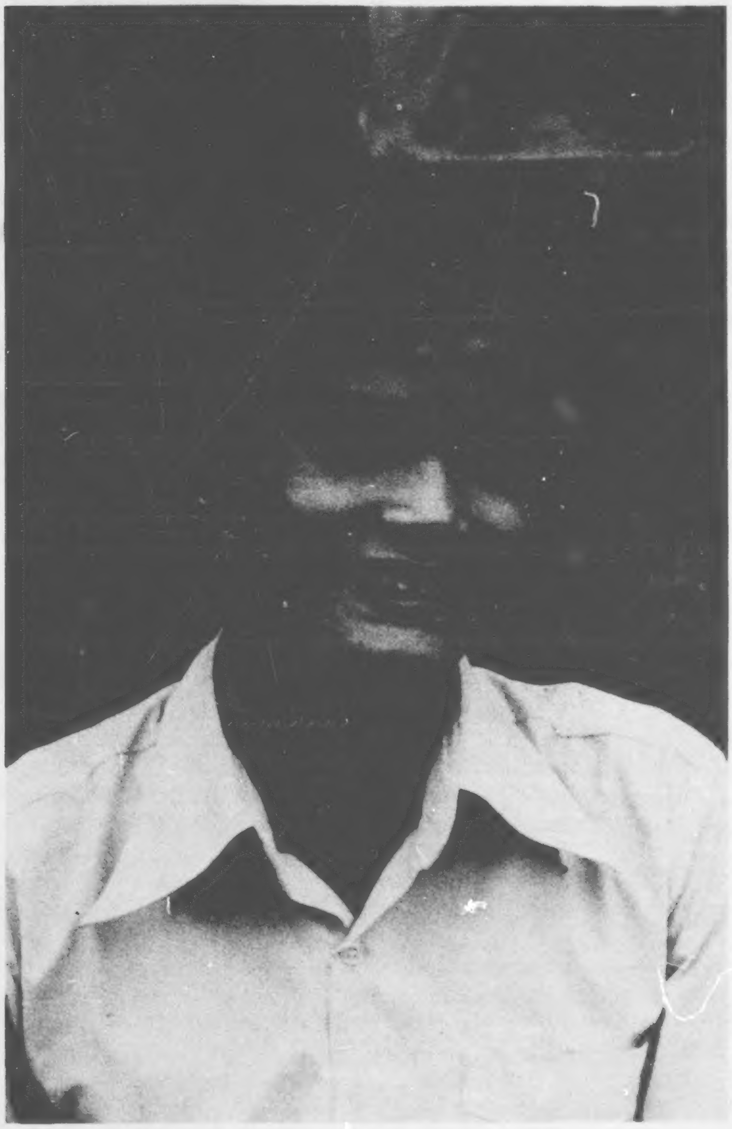
The uncontrolled growth and concentration of industry in the major urban centers of Taiwan continues today, widening and reinforcing the gap between rural farm and urban ways of life. Unless the Nationalist government takes decisive action soon to deal with the problems of the island's agricultural sector and to reverse the rural-to-urban flow of population, the prospects for the continued, rapid development of Taiwan seem shaky.

EPILOGUE

Such action now seems forthcoming. The massive increase in the price of oil after 1973 and the worldwide inflation and recession of 1974-1976 awakened the Taiwan government to the dangers of a development policy dependent on urban industrialization based on foreign capital and markets. As factories closed or cut back in production in response to the crises in the world economic system, many urban-industrial jobs were lost. Moreover, as the trend toward deagrarianization of the island's economy continued, agricultural productivity met only about 88 per cent of Taiwan's own food needs.

As a result, the government, which earlier had paid little more than lip service to the significance of agriculture in Taiwan's economy, now appears to be taking important and active steps to invigorate the agrarian sector of the island. In fall 1975 a new ruling was enacted to prevent the continued turnover and use of agricultural land for industrial, commercial or residential purposes. In addition, the government recently made it possible for the farmer in Taiwan to reap much higher income for his rice by lifting the price controls on this commodity. This new policy already has served as a major stimulus to rice productivity and, apparently, has made farming in Taiwan a more profitable and, perhaps, a less undesirable occupation.

The impact of world economic developments has had the momentary effect of slowing the up-to-now massive out-migration of rural people in Taiwan. (In fact, the loss of urban-industrial jobs has resulted in significant amounts of reverse—urban-to-rural—migration.) Only time, however, will tell which direction future migration and deagrarianization of Taiwan will take.



Ah Kung.

TAIWAN

2

Education

THEY CALL HIM AH KUNG

by SHELDON APPLETON

Education is a serious and important matter on Taiwan, where more than a fourth of the population is enrolled in school. For education is the gateway to higher living standards and to higher status—a gateway that was not open to the farmers of past generations. The examinations for entry into high school and later college are difficult, and the competition is keen, but the exams are open to anyone, and many farmers' sons and some daughters have passed them and moved to the modern world of the cities to continue their education.

Education: The Traditional System

Competitive examinations are not new to China. For more than a thousand years an elaborate system of such examinations was a primary avenue for recruiting the government officials who advised the emperor and governed China. During most of this period, these examinations were based on officially sanctioned interpretations of the Confucian classics. It was believed that those who best understood the moral precepts and customs set forward in these classics were best qualified to govern. In practice, the examinations—given at local, provincial, and national levels—often emphasized rote memorization of the classic works more than understanding of them, and required candidates to write treatises on them in a highly artificial form and with meticulous accuracy in calligraphy.

Whatever their shortcomings, these examinations served important functions for the Chinese imperial system. In addition to providing a corps of educated and disciplined men to govern the state, they provided an ideological basis for rule—a merit system—and an avenue of social mobility by which the clever and ambitious could work within the system to achieve material rewards and social recognition. In theory, any boy was eligible to take the imperial examinations. But the life of the degree candidate was a hard one, requiring enormous self-discipline, intellectual conformity, and financial support over the many years required to learn to read and write the ideographic characters, and to master and nearly memorize the classic books on which the exams were based. The perennial exam failure, often living in poverty as well as frustration, is a pathetic stock character in Chinese folklore. An even more familiar character is the poor boy, educated through the sacrifice of his family, or even fellow-villagers, who wins through success in the examinations national renown and appropriate recognition and material rewards for those who made his achievement possible.

Schoolgirls, cleaning up roadside.

There is considerable controversy among scholars about exactly how much opportunity for social mobility this examination system accompanied or followed their military forces to Taiwan. Since then, the Nationalists have continued to claim to be the government of all China. A nationalist government exists parallel to provincial, city, and local governments whose jurisdiction is limited to local matters. Positions in the national government are still filled largely by Mainlanders, despite the fact that more than 85 per cent of the governed are Taiwanese. (About 13 per cent of the population are Mainlanders. The remaining 2 per cent are aborigines, of Malay-Polynesian origin, living mainly on the east coast of the island.) Except for a small number of officials elected to represent Taiwan province and Taipei city in national government bodies, only provincial assemblymen, city councillors, and local officials are elected by the people. Most of these are Taiwanese, but though these officials decide matters of considerable interest to local residents, their real power is strictly limited. The ruling Kuomintang Party is the only major organized political force on the island.

Taiwanese-Mainland Chinese Tension

So although it is true that the Taiwanese are Chinese, and that the cultural differences between them and the Mainlanders are really no greater than the differences among Mainlanders from different regions of China, the fact of continued Mainlander rule has made the division between these groups potentially one of the most explosive issues on Taiwan's political scene. Among the new generation, born and educated almost entirely on Taiwan, differences in outlook, values, and experience between the descendants of Mainlanders and Taiwanese are relatively few. Yet these young people continue to identify themselves in their own minds as Mainlanders or Taiwanese and to choose friends somewhat disproportionately from their own grouping.

Relations between Taiwanese and Mainlanders are complicated by a number of historical facts. Most of the land in the countryside was already owned by Taiwanese, so the Mainlander immigrants settled largely in the cities, where they still tend to be concentrated. Few of them spoke the language regularly used by most Taiwanese. Some of the immigrants were wealthy, and most were far better educated than the average Taiwanese. These facts contributed to a considerable economic, social, and even geographic gap between members of the two groupings. Mainlanders, with their educational advantages, have tended to dominate the civil service, the officer corps of the army—into which Taiwanese young men are also drafted—and the professions. Taiwanese predominate in the countryside and in the business community. The income gap between city and countryside on Taiwan is thus to some extent an income gap between Taiwanese and Mainlanders as well. There is considerable intermarriage, but most of it, reflecting this socioeconomic situation, is between middle-aged Mainlander men—relatively well-established financially—and young Taiwanese women. Because many of the Mainlander immigrants were soldiers, there are many fewer middle-aged Mainlander women than men. Taiwanese men and Mainlander women rarely marry outside their own group.

provided at various times in Chinese history. In any event, there was enough for apparently widespread belief in the possibility of such advancement—as many Americans believe that hard work brings success and that any boy can become President.

There was during much of this period a system of government-sponsored schools to provide training in the classics for young men who had shown some early intellectual promise. Families who could afford it engaged private tutors for their children or other young relatives who seemed to have some chance at success. A gentry family which could not produce any successful degree candidates over a generation or more was very likely to suffer a serious decline in its fortunes, since business and other enterprises were highly dependent on government sponsorship or support. Most Chinese, however, and especially farmers, had no formal education at all, and remained illiterate all their lives. They learned what they had to know about their place in society by working from an early age, in most cases at their fathers' or mothers' sides. Women were of course excluded entirely from the examination life and the educational system.

China's inability to cope with Western incursions on its territory in the nineteenth century led to the disintegration of its traditional society and eventually to revolution. The examination system was finally ended in 1905, a few years before the total collapse of the imperial system itself.

Years of Transition

Just a decade before, in 1895, the Chinese Empire was forced to cede the island of Taiwan to Japan as the result of China's humiliating defeat in the Sino-Japanese War. The Japanese administration, though oppressive, was relatively competent and honest, and laid the groundwork for the island's recent development. Under Japanese rule, however, a majority of the rural population received no formal education whatever, and only a small minority attended secondary school. When Chinese Nationalist forces took control of the island after Japan's surrender in 1945 at the end of the Second World War, many Taiwanese looked forward to the prospect of being ruled by their own countrymen again. Their hopes were not fulfilled. For the next four years, the Nationalists' top leaders were preoccupied with the struggle against the Communists on the mainland, and the administration their subordinates foisted on Taiwan was not only oppressive but corrupt and unbelievably insensitive to the hopes and needs of the masses. An incident on February 28, 1947, provoked some Taiwanese to protest. The government called in reinforcements from the mainland and massacred between ten and twenty thousand Taiwanese, including a good proportion of the island's small educated elite. Even today, this incident has not been forgotten.

By the end of 1949, the Nationalists were forced off the mainland and more than two million refugees (often called "Mainlanders")

In these circumstances, the main complaint of most Taiwanese students has not been, as Americans might imagine, that the political system is undemocratic. Neither Taiwanese nor Mainlander students—not even those most opposed to the present government—seem really interested in the trappings of democracy as they are understood in the West. What they want is not a political system run by majority rule in free multiparty elections with dissenters protected, but an honest and competent government, run along traditional paternalistic lines by and for the residents of Taiwan. And, of course, they do not want to feel excluded from top positions in the political structure.

Among both Taiwanese and Mainlander students, there are those who feel discriminated against in pursuing the careers of their choice. The Taiwanese point to Mainlander domination of the command posts in government and doubt whether they have the same opportunity to rise to top governmental and Kuomintang positions open to their Mainlander schoolmates. Mainlander youths, in contrast, note that the economy is dominated by Taiwanese and doubt that their chance to climb to top positions in the business world is equal to that of Taiwanese classmates with family business connections. The Mainlanders add that the government is so intent on broadening its base that young Taiwanese may actually be getting preferential access to lower level civil service and government jobs as well.

Since the Nationalist government was replaced in the United Nations by its Communist rival in 1971, Mainlander-Taiwanese differences appear to have been subordinated somewhat, and the fledgling Taiwan Independence Movement, led mostly by students and former students in the United States and Japan, seems to have lost momentum. The impression of most observers is that neither ethnic group would particularly welcome the prospect of Communist rule. Perhaps this is in part the result of the continued emphasis on the evils of communism throughout the school curriculum and in the society at large. At the elite colleges, it has been reported that the shock accompanying the erosion of Taiwan's international position produced an awakening of the social consciences of many students, and led them to take a new interest in their studies and in what they could do to help their fellow citizens. The death in 1975 of President Chiang Kai-shek, who, along with Sun Yat-sen was held up to generations of schoolchildren as a model of loyalty, dedication, and moral behavior, is likely to have further emphasized in the minds of young graduates the uncertainty of Taiwan's future—and their own—despite the smoothness of the transition to rule by Chiang Ching-kuo, the Generalissimo's eldest son.

The Environment: Physical and Psychological

The material progress that Taiwan has experienced over the last two decades has been visible and tangible to almost all its people. Until the financial doldrums of the mid-1970s, the island's real per

A small Taiwan city.

capita income increased more than 5 per cent a year over a 20-year period. In the cities new factories, homes, and tourist hotels were built at a fantastic rate. Streets once clogged with bicycle cabs pedalled by tattered migrants from the countryside are now clogged instead by tens of thousands of motorcycles, taxicabs, and even private cars. Mail is sorted by zip code, and television sets, refrigerators, automatic washers, and even telephones are increasingly common in urban middle-class homes.

Villages and farm areas have changed less than the cities. Inequality of incomes in Taiwan is about comparable to that in the United States. During Taiwan's generation of growth these inequalities have been reduced only slightly, and the main gap has been that between the cities and the rural areas. Job opportunities in the cities have raised the cost of labor on the farms, and government policies such as control of the price of rice, have contributed to making it hard for the farmer to make ends meet. The percentage of the working force employed in farming has been reduced from a majority to less than a third as Taiwan's economy has expanded into industrial production.

Nevertheless, material progress has reached the villages, too. Tap water, electric lights, sewing machines, automatic rice cookers, radios, and electric fans can be found in many farmhouses, and TV aerials dot the rural landscape. Taiwan is a small island, about the size of Connecticut and Vermont combined, with a population, in the late 1970s, of over 16 million—the highest concentration of people per square mile of any country in the world. Most farming areas are not far from a sizable city with a factory or other industrial facility. Though Taiwan's workers put in more hours for much lower wages than their counterparts in the Western world or Japan, the farmer can see that his own hours are longer still, and his earnings often less. There is a new awareness of alternatives that did not exist a generation ago.

A housewife rides to work.

A rural wedding.

There is, too, a liberating sense of the loosening of traditional obligations to family members. Family relations on Taiwan remain close by Western standards, but they are beginning to change. Though far from achieving equality of status, women are no longer viewed simply as appendages of their husband's families or servants of their mothers-in-law. The relationship between husband and wife has become more important, and the weight of the relationship between father and son has diminished somewhat. Though Western-style dating is rare, especially in the countryside, more and more young people on Taiwan are courting and selecting their own mates, usually subject still to parental approval, rather than having their marriages arranged in the traditional manner. Fathers feel less need to play the stern patriarch, and freer to act less distant from their wives and children. Relationships among members of farm families thus have become less formal and in some ways more pleasant for all concerned.

Film Dialogue

Ah Kung: *I'll write the title of a book. Yen-jen, are you going somewhere after the exams?*

Yen-jen: *I'm not sure yet.*

Ah Kung: *This ink is too thin.*

Yen-jen: *Yes, the characters are not black enough.*

Ah Kung: *This is terrible. I'm out of practice. Remember when we had to do three pages a week?*

Yen-jen: *I had a different teacher.*

Ah Kung: *Lucky you.*

Zuei-chin: *That was the supervisor for Class C.*

Ah Kung: *I'm right out of practice. Be sure to give me some tips on anything important you've read for the exams.*

Yen-jen: *Yes, me too.*

Ah Kung and friends.

Education: Formal and Informal

In Taiwan today, education is being extended to the masses, rather than merely to an elite, and to women as well as to men. Among young people, basic literacy is almost universal. The curriculum is not limited to the Confucian classics, as it was during imperial times. And the life of Ah Kung and his schoolmates is very different from that of imperial degree candidates in the old days.

Nevertheless, there are certain continuities. Certainly, the life of ambitious schoolchildren on Taiwan today is not easy. School is in session five and a half days a week, and a good deal of homework is usually assigned. A typical program for junior high school students like Ah Kung might include Chinese language, science, math, English, history, geography, and civics courses emphasizing morals training and Dr. Sun Yat-sen's "Three Principles of the People" (Nationalism, "Democracy" and Livelihood).* Physical education, music, drawing, scouting, and home economics for girls** are also taken at various times during the junior high school years, and commercial and vocational courses such as soil science, agriculture, drafting and use of the abacus are generally available as electives. While much of the classroom curriculum is divorced from the realities of their life as farm children, courses in agriculture are nonetheless among the least popular.

Ah Kung with his grandfather.

As students approach the age when entrance examinations are taken, these classes are often supplemented by special "cramming" sessions, often taught by the regular teacher after school hours. Those who miss these cram sessions may find themselves at a disadvantage in trying to pass the exams. Paying for these extra sessions, and the loss of hours of labor in the fields—where they receive their practical education as future farmers—represent a substantial sacrifice for many farm families. The students are conscious of these sacrifices, and this knowledge increases the burden of responsibility which they carry in their efforts to compete successfully in school. Grades are reported regularly, and an individual student's grades and class standing are well known to his family and fellow students. Academic success gains "face" or prestige for the student and his family. Academic failure brings some loss of face in addition to limiting the prospects for future success. One psychologist has found that these pressures result in

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*The first of Dr. Sun's Three Principles is *Nationalism*. The second, often referred to as "Democracy," is more accurately translated as *Popular Sovereignty* or "people's rights." It calls for rule by an elite with the consent of the governed, based on an amalgamation of Western democratic and Chinese traditional forms. The third principle, *Livelihood*, envisions a non-Marxist socialism which draws substantially on the single tax theories of the American economist, Henry George.

These principles, enunciated most systematically in 1924, seem to have crystallized the aspirations of many Chinese, and Dr. Sun's memory has continued to be honored as well by Taiwan. Through the mid-1970s, Dr. Sun's wife, Soon Ching-ling, a sister of Madame Chiang Kai-shek, held positions of symbolic importance in the government of the People's Republic of China in Peking.

**Norma Diamond, "A Chinese Farm Wife," film essay, *Faces of Change*, American Universities Field Staff, 1976.

Film Dialogue

Q: *What do you usually do at harvesting time?*

Ah Kung: *I help in drying the grain or winnowing it. I also take turns in guarding the grain against the ducks.*

Zuei-chin: *My family mainly grows rice. But during the winter we also cultivate mushrooms.*

Q: *How do you cultivate them?*

Zuei-chin: *First you prepare the straw, then you send the workers in. It's very tough.*

Q: *What do you mean?*

Zuei-chin: *The mushroom shack is sealed with plastic sheets. Inside the heat is scorching. It's about 136° F in there. There's steam everywhere and no air to breathe. It's suffocating.*

Q: *What do you do during the harvest?*

Yen-jen: *I help dry the rice and winnow it.*

Film Dialogue

T.H. Hong: *Ah Kung in what events are you competing in the township games?*

Ah Kung: *Javelin throwing and broad jump.*

T.H. Hong: *When is that?*

Ah Kung: *I'm not sure.*

T.H. Hong: *Are you in the first team or are you a reserve?*

Ah Kung: *What difference does it make?*

many cases not only in the students' preoccupation with their school performance, but in nightmares and fear of darkness and ghosts.

Until 1968, entrance to junior high school was restricted to those able to pass a comprehensive exam. (Elementary school lasts six years on Taiwan, junior and senior high school normally three years each.) The strain on 11-12-year-old sixth grade students was so great that each year a number of suicides by children in this age group were reported in the press. Since admission to junior high schools was opened to everyone in 1968, government-sponsored studies have shown gains in height, weight, and visual ability by children in this age group, presumably due both to the reduction of academic pressures and to improvements in nutrition made possible by Taiwan's economic growth.

The atmosphere of Taiwan's schools is far more paternalistic and authoritarian than that of most American schools. In most cases boys and girls attend separate schools—or at least separate classes—through high school. Much of the work, beginning with the learning of the ideographic characters in which the Chinese language is written, involves rote memorization in traditional fashion. Textbooks and teaching materials are uniform throughout the island, and are prescribed by the Ministry of Education rather than by the teachers or local school authorities. The teachers do most of the talking, and are seldom challenged by members of the class. Though the relationship between young children and their teachers is often good, discipline is relatively strict. Physical punishments are sometimes used, and shaming a student who has misbehaved or even answered a question foolishly is fairly common. Repetition and drill are customary learning techniques. It has been suggested that one reason for the remarkable success of Taiwan's Little League baseball teams was the greater discipline of the Taiwan youngsters and their greater willingness to drill repeatedly on fundamentals.

Even though the emphasis is on team play rather than individual glory, participation in competitive athletics—for girls as well as boys—is clearly the result of Western influence. In traditional Chinese culture, face-to-face competition was avoided lest it cause loss of "face" to the loser. Except for successful scholars, a person's place in life was generally thought to be the result of birth or fortune rather than the reward of his own efforts. In team sports, however, success can be attained by self-mastery, disciplined effort and loyalty to the group. And though defeats hurt, they must be accepted gracefully and followed by more determined effort. Competitive sports provide a useful psychological training ground for the economic competition characteristic of an industrialized capitalistic society. Still, sports and games provide some of the happiest moments in the daily lives of young students like Ah Kung and his friends.

Primary group relations among Taiwan schoolchildren also tend to differ somewhat from those in the United States. American schoolchildren are actually no less constrained to conform to the norms for behavior established by their peer group. But, as Richard Wilson has shown, American schoolchildren tend to see the teacher and other authority figures as outsiders, and to use the peer group as a buffer against their demands. Groups of American schoolchildren have norms of their own, usually very different from those of the school and the adult community. Chinese schoolchildren, on the other hand, tend to see the teacher as an insider, and to identify the norms of their group with those of the school authorities. Departure from these norms can bring disapproval from both school authorities and schoolmates, a very difficult burden to bear. On the other hand, Taiwan schoolchildren may be less likely than their American counterparts to be faced with conflicting adult and peer group norms and the need to choose between them.

The relationship between classmates is a special one among Chinese. Schoolmates, and especially those in the same class, incur lifelong obligations to one another. It is likely that Ah Kung's circle of friends, when he reaches adulthood, will include some of the same chums he now plays, studies, and bikes to school with. Even those with whom he is not particularly friendly will feel entitled to call upon him for small favors when he is in a position to help them, and he, in turn, will expect them to reciprocate. Generations ago, when few farmers' sons went to school, this network of friendship and mutual aid was confined much more closely to their own localities. Today, nearly everyone goes to school, and while the family and adult authorities still exercise a major influence on young people's values and attitudes, the importance of the peer group is growing.

Film Dialogue

Yao-huei Hong: *Your last step should be like this. The javelin should be straight and as close as possible to your center of gravity. This will give you more strength. The strength should come from your waist. On your last step look up and keep your arms straight. Try again. Not too close to the line. That's better. You can come closer still . . . You mustn't forget the principles of sportsmanship whether you are competing or not. Winning or losing is not the most important thing. Don't accuse the umpire of being unfair, and don't argue with him. I place more emphasis on sportsmanship than on winning.*

Students: *Thank you sir.*

Yao-huei Hong: *Right, dismiss the class and get dressed.*

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Ah Kung and friend swim in an irrigation canal.

Mass Education: How Much, For What, and For Whom?

Many children in the countryside begin their school careers with certain disadvantages. The language of instruction in the public schools is *kuo yu*, the national language, a northern Chinese dialect used also as the language of instruction on the mainland. But only a small proportion of the people of Taiwan speak this dialect in their homes. (Speakers of one Chinese dialect cannot readily understand other dialects, though the ideographic writing system is understood by all literate persons.) Most of the population are descendants of southern Chinese migrants who came to the island during the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, and speak the southern Minnan or Hakka dialects. Many, though not all, Mainlanders are native speakers of *kuo yu*, and, as we have noted, a disproportionate share of them live in Taipei and other large cities. Thus most of Taiwan's students, especially in the rural areas, are taught in school in a language different from the one spoken in their homes. The methods of language instruction are effective, and the children soon become quite fluent in *kuo yu*. Nevertheless, some will find it difficult to attain the degree of proficiency necessary to compete effectively on the examinations with those who have been constantly exposed to *kuo yu* in their homes.

FILM
LINK

Most young people in the countryside will also be expected to help with farm chores. Girls, in particular, will be expected to help with housework, and less allowances may be made for the time they need to study, since the general feeling is that it is more important for a boy to continue his education than for a girl. About two-thirds of those who take the college entrance examination are boys. Farm parents themselves are generally less well educated than parents in the cities, and are thus less able to help their children with their studies or to transmit to them the attitudes and expectations which tend to be associated in Taiwan, as elsewhere, with academic success. And certainly few farm families will be able to afford to

Girls help mother with cooking chores.

send their children to the private schools patronized by the more affluent city-dwellers to provide their children with an advantage in the competition for places in good high schools and colleges. Some of these private schools have been so successful in preparing their students to pass the exams that the Ministry of Education has moved to stop them from requiring entrance exams of their own, and plans ultimately to nationalize them and absorb them into the public school system. Exam scores determine not only whether a student may continue his or her education, but also which school the student will be admitted to. Students at the better high schools are more likely to gain admission to the high prestige universities and colleges. Even the public schools tend to be better in the cities than in the rural areas, because the academic competition among students is keener, and because the best-educated teachers most often prefer to live in urban areas.

Students from farm families of relatively modest circumstances, like Ah Kung and his friends, thus enter the competition for academic success and status with certain handicaps. In some cases, the expectation that a child will go on to high school may be so low that the pressure on the child is considerably less than on his counterpart in a middle-class family in the city.

Both those who fail in the academic competition, or drop out of it, and those who succeed face an imposing set of problems as they grow toward adulthood. Income on Taiwan is closely related to education. Those who do not attend high school must expect to continue to find themselves at the bottom of the income and status ladders. If they stay on the farm, they will have to continue the long hours of painstaking toil that have been the lot of their forbears—and even then there is no guarantee they will manage to make a decent living on a small family farm. If they go to the city, it will most likely be to jobs as unskilled or semiskilled laborers, again at long hours, for relatively low pay, with few days off, and often separated from their kinsmen and the familiar network of customs of their home village. Very possibly, they may find themselves doing both—working at a nearby factory during the day and coming home to share the farm chores with a wife and perhaps elderly parents or working age children. In any case, their hopes and expectations, unlike their grandfathers', have been raised by their contacts with the city, by what they see in Western-made movies and on their television sets, and by the success of some of their schoolmates or kinsmen. The farmer of past generations did not feel, as today's young farmers may, that he could have had a better life had he been clever enough or disciplined enough or strong enough to grasp the opportunities available to him.

Some of the young people who do not continue their education, in fact, have broken from the traditional mold anyway, and have turned to youth gangs and juvenile delinquency. These symptoms of alienation and the breakdown of traditional beliefs are much less common in Taiwan than they are in the United States, but they are

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Film Dialogue

Q: *You finish junior high school a year from now. What are your plans?*

Yung-tsieng: *I'm taking the exams.*

Q: *What about you Ah Kung?*

Ah Kung: *I'm not worried. It depends on the entrance exam.*

Q: *For what kind of school?*

Ah Kung: *Technical school. If I fail the exam I'll look for work.*

Q: *What kind?*

Ah Kung: *I'll just take a job.*

Q: *How about you? Will you take over your family farm?*

Zuei-chin: *I don't know.*

Q: *What do you think?*

Zuei-chin: *I'll sell it.*

Q: *And you? How will you manage your rice fields?*

Hsin-wei: *I'll hire people to do it, workers.*

frequent enough to occasion concern on the part of both government and the populace, and they are becoming more frequent as urbanization and industrialization on the island continue.

If the fruits of academic failure are often bitter, the rewards for school success may be bittersweet. Those who gain entrance to high school (just under two-thirds of those finishing junior high), unless they choose a vocational track, face another three years of high pressure study culminating in the college entrance exams. Only about a quarter of those who take these exams succeed in any given year, though many take them more than once. Lists of those who pass are published in the newspapers, enhancing or dashing the hopes and prestige of the young competitors and their families.

For the very best students, passing the exams will not be enough. They will want to score high enough to gain entrance into the highest prestige schools, like National Taiwan University (*T'ai Ta*) in Taipei. In listing their preferences before taking the exams, most of these students are willing to adjust their major field as necessary to get into a highly ranked school. If they cannot win acceptance, for example, by the Department of Chinese Literature at *T'ai Ta*, most would prefer acceptance in, say, the Department of Sociology of that school rather than in the Department of Chinese Literature at a lower-ranked university. As a result, many college students are not enrolled in the academic areas which interest them most.

Once they gain entrance into college, few students are kept from graduation for academic reasons, and many have taken advantage of this to relax their efforts after the strain of the preceding years. But college graduation does not guarantee placement in an appropriate professional job, and graduates who have found no jobs, or, more likely, have been forced to settle for one far below their aspirations, are among the most disillusioned and unhappy people in Taiwan. Because so many desire the status of college graduate, the government has been under pressure to expand continuously the number of students taken into college regardless of the ability of the economy to absorb graduates. Thus the number of students attending colleges and universities soared from less than 12,000 in 1953-54 to almost 52,000 in 1963-64 and to over 270,000 in 1973-74, despite the government's efforts to shift as many students as possible into vocational schools.

One result of this oversupply of graduates and undersupply of professional jobs has been a competition among the best university students to leave the country for study abroad, most often in the United States. (There were almost 10,000 students from Taiwan in the United States in 1973.) Once they have gone, well under one-twentieth of these students has returned to Taiwan, except to visit. In one respect, this exodus can be viewed as a "brain drain," drawing from the island some of its brightest young people. From another vantage point, it can be seen as a "safety valve," allowing some of those with the highest expectations—and therefore the highest potential for disillusionment—to escape the limitations of the system, and lessening somewhat the imbalance between graduates and available professional jobs.

Studies of the attitudes of college students on Taiwan have shown that many of those unable to make this "outer migration" experience something of an "inner migration" instead, orienting themselves increasingly, in the course of their studies, toward self- and family-oriented goals, and progressively withdrawing from concern for their society as a whole. The concerted efforts of the school system to expand students' loyalties and concerns from the family and other primary groups to the state and from particularistic to performance criteria appear to be quite successful with elementary school children. But as the students move from junior high school through college age, an increasing degree of cynicism begins to emerge. Perhaps discrepancies are noted between the type of behavior urged in the morality training that pervades the school curriculum and the actual behavior of authority figures with whom the child comes into contact or reads about in the papers. In the end, it seems to be among the most successful students, enrolled in top-ranking universities, that the greatest degree of cynicism and tacit opposition to the social and political system is to be found. Since open opposition could be dangerous—even to family and friends—it is rarely expressed, except in private conversation between those who feel assured of one another's personal loyalty and discretion.

Evidence from the relatively few opinion surveys conducted in Taiwan suggests that the college educated are among the least satisfied elements in the population, despite their greater social status and material wealth. The college educated, for instance, are less likely than others to vote in local elections. Why is it that those who have been most successful in Taiwan's educational competition seem to be more discontented than those who fell behind? Partly, it is because a person's satisfaction depends not only on what he has but on what he wants and expects. The educated person, on Taiwan and elsewhere, has the opportunity to have more, but exposure to the modern world, to cities, to the standard of living in more affluent lands, teaches that person also to want and expect more. As material needs are satisfied, they assume lower priority and other kinds of values—a meaningful life, inner harmony, full development of each person's talents—take on a new importance. Thus the gap between aspiration and reality may be greater for those who have more than for those who have less, but whose expectations are low.

Education: Changing the Face of Taiwan

There is another part to the answer, too. It is that what modernity has to offer is far more visible and tangible than what it takes away. For rural youth, attendance at high school and certainly college usually involves a physical separation from the family and village.

Film Dialogue

Q: *What will you do when you leave school?*

Hsin-wei: *I'll try to pass the exam. If not I'll stay here at home to help with the farming or look for a job.*

Q: *What kind of a job?*

Hsin-wei: *Television repairman.*

Q: *What will you do with your rice fields?*

Yen-jen: *My father is thinking of selling them.*

Enduring ties are often formed with classmates and sometimes with teachers and others. Success and status are determined by performance as well as by family reputation and connections. Learning modern science casts doubts on traditional customs and religious beliefs. Slowly the complex network of social controls which have bound Chinese society together for millennia begins to erode.

One result is alienation. People must depend more on themselves and less on relatives and traditional obligations and customs. As old solutions to social problems are discarded, the necessity arises for finding new ways of coping with them, and there is often little agreement on what the new ways should be. Right and wrong are unclear. Even the personalities of young people are changed. On Taiwan, educated youth, compared with their parents, are "more socially assertive, less self-controlled, less concerned with the opinions of others and more direct in interpersonal relations."

Thus the best educated residents of Taiwan, who are most attracted to Western ways on the one hand, are most wary of them on the other. They want the material comforts of an industrial society, but do not want to lose the close-knit family and other personal relationships they grew up with, nor to live with the growing impersonality, disrespect for elders, sexual permissiveness, juvenile crime, and violence experienced in Western countries and beginning to be seen in Taiwan itself. The goals set forward by the government seem to promise both the gradual achievement of Western-style living standards and the retention of the traditional personalized culture. But no major nation has managed to do this to date.

The shape of the lives of Taiwan's young people will no doubt be determined partly by forces beyond their control and probably even beyond their understanding—the maneuverings of the international balance of power, developments on the mainland, the vagaries of world energy and food production and the like. But for Ah Kung and his classmates what is different is not the choices they cannot make, but those they can. Their conviction that "farming is too hard" may have a great deal of significance for Taiwan's future, regardless of who rules it. If the island is to feed its people, the balance of incentives must lead a good number of Ah Kung's generation to go back to the land and till the fields.

Film Dialogue

Q: *Why don't you like farm work? What don't you like about it?*

Ah Kung: *Farm work is hard. Working in the city is hard too, but you kind of feel better there. There is a lot to be done on the farm in winter. It's much too hard.*

So far the trend has been for young people to choose the opportunities of the city over the hard work of the countryside. There is a great gap in income between city residents and farmers on Taiwan, and it is very difficult for farmers to make ends meet, caught as they are in a squeeze between rising prices for seeds and farm implements and government-controlled prices for rice. Moreover, the textbooks from which schoolchildren on Taiwan are taught, unlike those used in mainland China, give little emphasis to farming or to hard manual labor. The models held up for students to emulate are famous scholars, officials and soldiers, who have often received material rewards as well as social recognition for their achievements. Thus one study found that junior high school students "all aimed at high but unrealistic goals; everyone wanted to become 'a great man' with little interest in being an ordinary person."

Taiwan's government is aware of the need to keep its youth from leaving the land for the cities. It is making changes in its school curriculum and educational programs toward this end, as illustrated by the lecture on the new agriculture in the film, and trying to put more emphasis on agriculture and on vocational training. Whether these efforts will succeed in making farming an attractive life for Ah Kung and his friends, however, remains to be seen.

Whether he returns to the farm or chooses the beckoning new life of the city, with its promises and disappointments, in a critical sense Ah Kung has already entered the modern world. He is trying to choose for himself what his future will be. For better and for worse, his life will never be the same as the lives of those before him who knew of no alternatives to the world of village and fields—who could not even conceive of trying to change the shape of their lives by their own efforts and choices.

Farmhouse with courtyard.

Film Dialogue

Careers Advisor: *For several thousand years agriculture has been the foundation of China. Recent changes have brought our society to the threshold of industrialization. However, we must not overlook the importance of agriculture.*

You need not go to the city . . . to Taipei or Kao-shiung. You need not work in the factories.

WET CULTURE RICE

By ALBERT RAVENHOLT

Taiwan has extraordinary significance for peoples of the world who look to rice as their principal food [see Appendix]. During half a century of colonial occupation, Japanese administrators pioneered in applying Japanese science and engineering to rice growing in Taiwan in order to grow the surplus needed to feed a burgeoning industrial population in the home islands. With imperial speed, the Japanese constructed dams and extended irrigation canals. Since Taiwan lies astride the Tropic of Cancer, it became an appropriate site for early efforts to breed desirable characteristics of the temperate *japanica* type of rice into the tropical *indica* and *javanica* types.*

Because the moist tropics contain great areas of uncultivated land, and have a climate and water supply suitable for growing certain crops over a much larger area and with higher yields, Taiwan has a second unique significance for those concerned with more adequately feeding the world's present and future population. Estimates promise a doubling of the present population, from about four billion to seven billion by the end of this century, and most of this increase will come among the rice eating peoples. Unlike any other grain crop, wet culture rice can be grown intensively on many soils of the moist tropics in a manner that insures maintenance and improvement of soil fertility with the most efficient utilization of fertilizers. In Taiwan today, one cultivated acre serves about seven persons; this is roughly the same density as Japan and one of the highest in the world. Unlike Japan, which is among the largest net importers of food, Taiwan has a higher average caloric intake, yet is almost "in balance"; imports—chiefly of soya beans, corn, and wheat—are almost equalled by exports of pork, sugar, bananas, canned mushrooms, asparagus, and other agricultural products. While average per crop rice yields in Taiwan are lower than in Japan, this is more than compensated for by a double crop on about 40 per cent of Taiwan's rice fields. (The prevalent Japanese pattern is to raise one rice crop each year in most areas.) Moreover, two rice crops on the same field are usually followed by a winter planting of sweet potatoes, corn, wheat, tobacco, or an oilseed crop. Because this intensive level of food production in Taiwan is being accomplished primarily under tropical conditions, it is hoped that the methods can be adapted to many food-short lands of the less-developed world.

Growing Rice in Taiwan

Growing a crop of rice in Taiwan today is a demanding enterprise. Naturally, it is the subject of frequent and intense discussion among farmers, their neighbors, and other members of the community—as are crops among those who live by the land everywhere. Among government officials there is an almost comparable

*Hybridization for breeding improved *japanica* rice had begun early in Japan in 1904, enhancing the grain plant's productivity by selection for short stems, stiff straws and many tillers from each root to give the maximum number of heads per plant. By contrast, *indica* and *javanica* types grow tall, resulting in less efficient fertilizer utilization. They are also more likely to lodge or break at the stem base and fall so that grain forming in the head rots in the water of the rice fields.

School and rice fields.

concern, for assuring abundant rice supplies at reasonable prices is the most effective means for stabilizing the cost of living and keeping people content. In Tsao Tun ("straw shoes") Township in Central Taiwan where the mountainous three-fourths of the island's landscape levels out toward the western coastal plain, heightened activity accompanies the approach of spring rice planting season, in late February or early March. (In southern Taiwan planting of the spring rice crop might begin a month earlier to allow raising a summer vegetable crop before the autumn rice crop is planted.) As shown in the films, the first task is to clear the paddy fields of straw stacked from the earlier rice harvest, if no other crop has been raised since. Straw may be hauled off to the farmyard to provide rough forage for cattle, or sold to mushroom farmers for fixing spores in their humid sheds, or burned with the stubble, as adding ash augments fertility. Some farmers compost their straw with pig manure for subsequent return to the fields.

Fields ready for planting.

Paddy fields are usually flooded at least a week before plowing to soften the soil. Although easier before the fields are soaked, it is still heavy work for man and water buffalo, because the plow still must be guided straight and at an even depth to insure turning under all the old roots, weeds, and other plant growth. While many farmers, like Hong Tsung-ming, continue to plow with water buffalo because their paddy fields are dispersed and at different elevations with dikes mounting up the slopes and no road access, there is mounting pressure for mechanization. Wages for hired help have risen rapidly as farms compete with factories for labor. Rather than devote attention and feed to a water buffalo, some farmers prefer to raise a beef animal and plow instead with a power tiller, which can do an even more thorough job of plowing and is five times as fast as the water buffalo. However, power tillers are costly. The average farmer tills only one *chia*, or two and one-half acres, and for most farmers the price of a power tiller—equivalent to US$1,650-US$2,100—represents more cash than they readily can find. Farmers increasingly are renting or financing the purchase of these small tractors through their multipurpose cooperatives, the Farmers' Associations. Since 58.2 per cent, or 525,761 hectares* of the total 902,617 hectares cultivated in Taiwan are in rice paddy fields, the market for such farm machinery is substantial. The speed of mechanization will depend in part upon the success of present experimental attempts by several industrialists in Taiwan to build a diesel-powered tiller that can sell for less than the tractors now imported. Whatever its source, mechanization will allow the average farmer more intensive use of his fields.

FILM LINK

Once a paddy field has been thoroughly plowed, it is harrowed twice as a rule, once in each direction to prepare a thoroughly puddled and smooth field with about two inches of water over it. This is the time when most fertilizer is applied, normally by hand broadcasting from a sack or pail. Depending upon soil analysis, applications of true phosphorous per hectare for each crop may range from 20 to 200 kilograms (one kilo equals 2.2 pounds).

*one hectare equals 2.47 acres.

Tilling: the old and new ways.

Potash applications also are gauged according to soil analysis and may vary from 90 kilos per hectare to nothing, depending partly upon whether that field has been used during the winter for growing sweet potatoes which utilize large quantities of this nutrient. Applications of nitrogen are most effectively made late as top-dressings in three stages beginning about two weeks after the rice seedlings have been transplanted. The amounts of true nitrogen applied per crop will be graduated according to the variety of rice grown.* During field preparation the farmer also will have applied whatever human night soil, hog manure, compost and salvaged nutrients, such as waste bean cake, he has conserved. Chemical fertilizer applications will be adjusted accordingly. As with farmers elsewhere who are adopting modern methods, the cost of buying fertilizer for such intensive applications is the rice growers' single largest expense. And decisions on how much fertilizer to use are influenced by the farmers' financial resources and anticipated prices for the harvest.

Rice seeds will have been planted in a seed bed at least two weeks before the start of the plowing. Especially for the spring crop, the bed should be sheltered from the wind and faced south to capture the maximum heat and sunshine for the sprouting rice shoots. Farmers choose the variety of rice to plant according to the site of their fields, length of growing season they want to allow—from 110 to about 155 days—and whether it is to be a spring or autumn crop. As a rule, varieties chosen for the first crop are not photosensitive and thus can be planted at any time. Most second crop varieties must be planted at a fixed date because flowering of the rice plant is triggered by a shortening of the days in autumn.

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*It is recommended that a long-stemmed *indica* rice receive 80 kilos per hectare, while the *Ponlai* variety, which is a *Japonica* type, should receive 50 per cent more, and the new short-stemmed *indica* varieties can profitably utilize twice as much nitrogen as their tall relatives.

Farmers in Taiwan speak of two types of rice; *Ponlai* and *Tsailai*. The former belongs to the subspecies *japonica* and includes several newly developed varieties, such as Chianung 242 and Tainan 5, that are more resistant to blast disease, respond better to fertilizer than the old varieties, and give higher yields. *Ponlai* grains are short, plump, and slightly sticky when cooked.* Grains of the *Tsailai*, or native varieties belonging to the subspecies *indica*,** are long, slender, and less cohesive after cooking. In Taiwan farmers normally secure their seed from the Farmers' Associations, exchanging rough paddy for an equal amount of rice seed certified for extension—in this manner growers are subsidized to encourage planting the best varieties.

Transplanting rice seedlings into the paddy field is so labor-intensive that engineers in Taiwan, as in Japan, are experimenting with mechanical means to accomplish this task. For the present, however, it remains a hand operation demanding about 12 man-days, or woman-days, of work per hectare of rice planted. First, the matted rice seedlings are cut from the seed bed. Since some roots are inevitably damaged in cutting under these seedlings to lift them, the tops usually are pruned. Seedlings are carried in baskets on bamboo poles to the fields, which meanwhile have been marked in grids. Depending upon the number of tillers, or stems a variety sends up from the same root, plants may be spaced 25 to 30 centimeters (roughly 10 to 12 inches) apart on the square. As the films illustrate, skilled rice transplanters move in a slow yet steady rhythm, lifting the rice seedling from the basket, thrusting its roots just the correct depth into the puddled field without breaking the stem of the seedling, while kicking the basket just far enough to the rear to allow setting the next row of plants. Rice planting is physically demanding, as one must wade stooped and barefoot in the soft mud, often in a drenching rain. The reward, however, a field with straight rows of light green rice shoots, makes a pretty sight in the eye of the farmer.

Fertilizer is distributed by hand.

Marking rows for planting rice seedlings.

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*Japanese, or others whose taste preferences have been Japanese-influenced, prefer this type.

**The first hybridized variety from the *indica* was Taichung Native 1, which proved popular in India and Southeast Asia because it was short and gave improved yields, even with lower soil fertility and irregular water supply.

Transplanting seedlings.

Raising paddy rice requires immense quantities of water. Although plant scientists and water conservation engineers in Taiwan are experimenting with rotational irrigation to reduce the total water quantity, farmers usually flood newly planted fields with at least four inches of water. If fields are allowed to dry during the growing season, opening cracks in the paddy, nitrogen tends to escape into the air, especially if urea fertilizer has been applied. Depending upon the character of the soil and its clay content, plus the skill of the farmer, growing a crop of rice on one hectare will require 10,000 to 15,000 cubic meters of water in a season. This quantity will supply in all 40 to 60 inches of water for cover, which is, of course, applied gradually. Growing one ton of milled rice normally requires about 3,500 tons of water. Lack of more extensive and effective irrigation in South and Southeast Asia to provide this water has been the chief villain slowing the spread of the Green Revolution in rice. Dependable irrigation, with water stored for the dry season in reservoirs and local distribution ponds, reaches 85 per cent of the paddy fields and is the most important single factor insuring Taiwan's high and regular yields.

FILM LINK

Although herbicides are beginning to be used, a good Chinese farmer will weed his rice fields three times, starting two to three weeks after transplanting. Weeding will be repeated twice, every week or two weeks, depending upon the location of the field and the season. Like Li Su-li, a careful farmer will continue to search his fields for weeds even after the rice plants have grown together and are shading the soil beneath. Spraying with insecticides and fungicides is the farmers' third biggest expense, after fertilizer and labor. The enemies of the rice plant are legion; there are five types of stem borers alone that eat their way up inside the stalk. Brown plant hoppers and green leaf hoppers are two of the farmers' most persistent enemies. Other common hazards include army worms, blast disease, and bacterial leaf blight. Recognizing the problem in time and selecting the correct spray requires expertise, and frequently farmers seek assistance from extension technicians employed by their cooperatives. But none of them can help much with one of the worst disasters that can ruin a Taiwan rice crop; typhoons. These storms, whose center winds sometimes exceed 100 miles per hour, periodically sweep in from the Pacific and lay waste to every field in their wake.

Harvesting is the busiest season for rice farmers. In a long day a conscientious worker can reap up to one-fifth of one hectare, grasping each clump of rice with his left hand while cutting with a sickle held in the right. Usually a crew of six to ten men is mustered to complete harvesting of a farmer's fields in one or two days.

After the paddy fields have been drained and dried for several weeks, portable threshers are dragged or carried to a convenient spot. These drum-type threshers, powered by foot pedal or a small gasoline engine, have wire teeth that rip the grain from the stalk. In one day this comparatively simple machine can thresh out three metric tons of unhusked paddy rice. Transporting the harvest from

Rice is hand-cut and threshed on a portable foot-pedal machine.

the fields has become a problem as yields have increased. Usually the heavy sacks must be carried to the nearest road, where they are loaded upon a farm wagon, a small truck, or a cart and hauled to the farmstead.

Preparation of Rice Paddy

Processes depicted in Film

- Plowing
- Flooding
- Tilling
- Harrowing
- Leveling
- Marking Rows
- Fertilizing
- Transplanting Rice Seedlings
- Weeding
- Cutting Mature Plants
- Threshing
- Winnowing
- Drying
- Stacking and Tying Straw

Labor shortages at harvest season create serious problems for Taiwan's farmers. In 1973, they paid up to the equivalent of US$6.50 per day for hired hands—an exorbitant price by their standards—and desperate farmers even appealed to the government for soldiers to help with the harvest. A farmer is also expected to feed his helpers, whether neighbors or hired, with bountiful cooking. Farm families pride themselves on the good food they serve, especially during the harvest, which also is an inducement for workers to return the next season.

Throughout Taiwan paddy rice is dried on cement courtyards that, as the films illustrate, normally are higher in the center to drain off rain water. Winnowing by hand or machine and drying rice are a farm wife's responsibility. Unhusked paddy rice must be repeatedly turned to insure even drying to less than 13 per cent moisture. If a rain shower threatens, the rice must be quickly piled and covered. Mechanical drying is becoming more common in Taiwan, as in Southeast Asia, although engineers have yet to develop a drier that uses fuel economically. Most promising is a small drier developed at IRRI that burns the rice hulls from previous millings to dry the new harvest. This system requires that drying and milling be centralized and is difficult to adapt to present conditions; either farmers would need to haul rice hulls from the mill back to their farmsteads or move wet grain to the mill. Most mills, moreover, are not designed to receive and handle such a volume of rice at one time.

Yields in Taiwan are calculated in brown rice (grain remaining after hulls are removed; the hull accounts for 20 per cent of the total weight of dried unhusked paddy rice). The first and major rice crop yields average 3,800 kilos per hectare. Because of numerous factors not yet fully understood, including less sunlight due to cloud cover that curtails photosynthesis, possible reduction in soil radiation, and differences in temperature, the second rice crop averages a yield of 2,600 to 2,800 kilos per hectare. On the annual cropped area totaling about 776,000 hectares this gives an average yield per hectare of 3,170 kilos of brown rice.

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After 1950, agricultural experiment stations in Taiwan, often directed and funded by the Chinese and American Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction (JCRR), energetically carried forward rice breeding programs. Since 1962 such developmental efforts in Taiwan have in turn made a major contribution to the pioneering work of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), established at Los Baños in the Philippines by the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations as a world center for improving rice

Drying and winnowing is done on the concrete courtyards at the farms.

crops. There three short, stiff varieties of rice from Taiwan were crossed with two from Indonesia, one from Sri Lanka (Ceylon), and one from the Philippines to produce IRRI's first new variety for the tropics: IR 8, the exceptionally productive and nonphotosensitive variety that could be planted at any time of the year. That first release was largely responsible for launching the Green Revolution in the world's rice fields, and since then new varieties have been developed by IRRI with greatly improved milling and taste qualities plus the insect and disease resistance so vital in a moist tropical environment.

Since 1953, total production of rice in Taiwan has increased from slightly over 1.6 million metric tons to about 2.5 million metric tons of brown rice. This annual increase, averaging more than 40,000 tons, results primarily from steady advances in farm productivity. Additional areas brought under rice cultivation through extension and improvement of irrigation have been almost balanced by the loss of rice land through conversion to industrial sites, housing and other urban uses, such as highways, and by the shift to other crops or orchards—all totaling about 10,000 hectares per year. Some 2,350,000 metric tons of brown rice are consumed annually.* And about a quarter of a million metric tons of brown rice are used for seed and feed or lost in manufacturing and storage.

Skilled and productive as they are, rice farmers in Taiwan face two major challenges. The first is to continue to make enough money for a reasonable living in the face of rising costs. Farmers feel that while the costs of fertilizer, insecticides, and labor keep climbing, the government is reluctant to allow the price of rice to rise at a comparable rate. The second and related challenge is to continue allowing Taiwan's inhabitants to enjoy what most of Asia lacks: an abundance of rice at reasonable prices made possible by self-sufficiency in production. Family planning is gradually, though

*Actually, during milling a portion of this weight is removed as bran and polish, and in Taiwan as elsewhere in Asia this portion, rich in protein and vitamins, usually is fed to pigs and poultry.

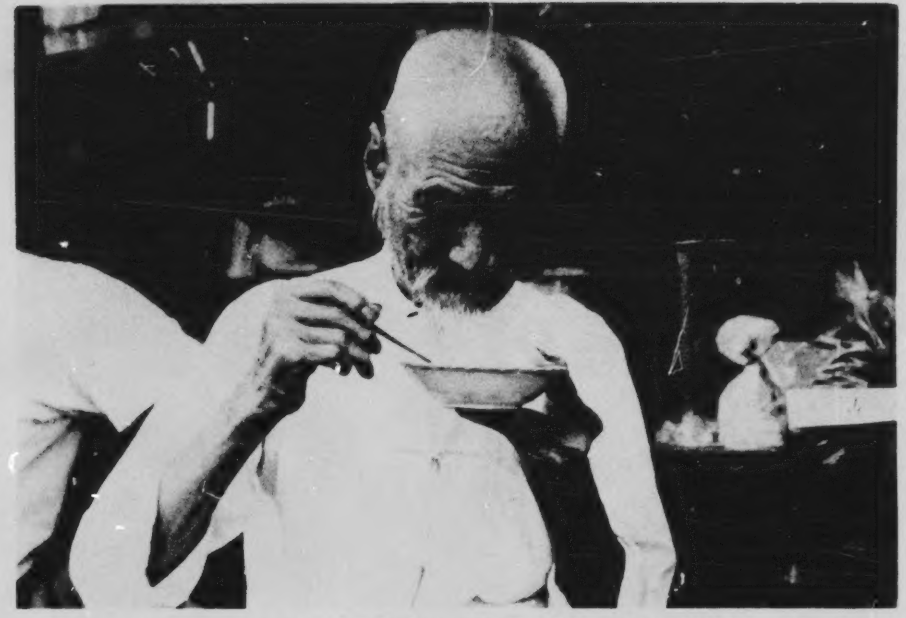
steadily, bringing down the birthrate and the government's goal is for each family to have two children. But the population, now approaching 16 million, is increasing at an average rate of 1.8 per cent annually. Each person consumes about 140 kilos of food per year, although per capita consumption is declining between one and one and one-half per cent annually. Roughly 60 per cent of the population live in cities, where the people are developing a greater taste for noodles and bread made from wheat. To provide for a population expanding at the present rate, farmers must each year increase rice production by an additional 40,000 metric tons. And this must be accomplished by ever more skilled and intensive cultivation of the already productive paddy fields, which today occupy almost all the available land that can be economically irrigated.

APPENDIX

Rice: Origins and Historical Role

Chinese speak of "taking rice" and "eating" with almost the same words. The expression symbolizes the importance of rice for them, as for about 60 per cent of the human race; it is the preferred staple, usually eaten in one of several forms three times a day. Most East Asians take rice as a gruel for breakfast, often with bits of pickled vegetables. For the main midday and evening meals, it is preferably cooked or steamed until each flaky, white grain easily separates from its neighbors in the gleaming bowl. In Laos, Northeastern Thailand, and several other countries, the preferred rice is glutinous, each grain sticking together when cooked. From the Philippines to Indonesia, India and many other lands this glutinous rice is a prized ingredient, often with coconut and sugar for preparing cakes, puddings, and other delicacies. Throughout Asia, since long before there were written records, rice has been important in religion and is still used in many rites today. Various festivals call for the preparation of special rice cakes, which are then given to relatives and friends to symbolize wishes for their prosperity, longevity and happiness. The European and American custom of throwing rice after a newly married couple is but one of these oriental fertility rites carried West. Because rice is the principal source of livelihood and wealth in these predominantly agrarian lands, many believe, as do Balinese farmers, that the plant was born of the cosmic union of the divine male and female creative forces represented by earth and water and is the particular concern of Dewi Sri, their goddess of agriculture.

Oryza sativa, the grass we know as rice, appears to have originated as a cultivated crop both in Southeastern Asia and India when man first began to till the soil. Forty-three centuries ago rice was part of the diet at Harappa and Mohenio-daro, important cities in the then great Indus Valley civilization. Although archaeological evidence suggests a heavier rainfall in the region then, today irrigation helps produce equally abundant rice yields in Pakistan. Records indicate that rice was already a valued crop in classical China. Sometime in the second milennium B.C., wet cultivation of rice was introduced to Indonesia and the Philippines, where the rice terraces girdling the mountains of Northern Luzon testify to those early farmers' engineering skills and mobilization of manpower. In the fifth century B.C., rice was cultivated in Sri Lanka and a hundred years later it

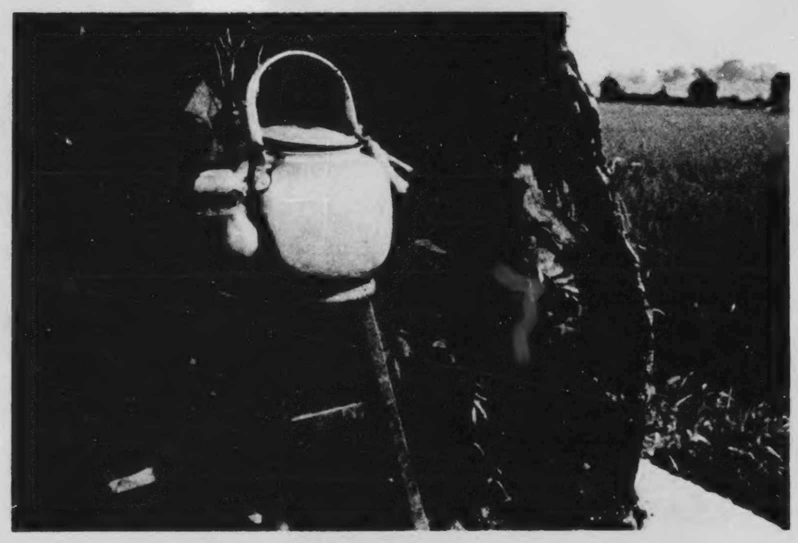


had spread west into Iran and thence to Babylonia and Syria. While the grain was traded to the Roman Empire, it is not mentioned in the Bible and only became a cultivated crop in Egypt in the ninth century A.D., when rice was carried along the southern Mediterranean by the conquests of Islam, eventually reaching Spain. About this time Malay settlers from Sumatra apparently brought wet-land rice cultivation to Madagascar. Meanwhile, rice was introduced from China to Japan in the first century B.C. and spread to the island of Guam, its furthest ancient advance into the Pacific. The more modern movement of the rice plant around the world came with the Age of Exploration. Although cultivation in Europe was restricted for fear of malaria and other fevers, rice was grown in Northern Italy late in the fifteenth century. By 1685, a sea captain had brought rice seed from Madagascar to the area of what is now South Carolina, inaugurating its cultivation in North America.

Whether the first cultivation of rice in flooded paddy fields developed simultaneously with or after slash and burn agriculture that included planting dryland varieties of rice at the start of the rainy season, remains a subject of conjecture among prehistorians. It is, however, certain that as each people mastered the skills of constructing level, diked paddy fields and canals to augment the impounded rainfall with irrigation, rice harvests provided the principal food, becoming the economic base of the great classical civilizations of Asia. Temples, painting, poetry, porcelains, and other refined achievements that we associate with ancient India, Indonesia, Cambodia, Japan, and China, would have been nonexistent without the unique micro-environment of the flooded paddy field. It allowed the growing of a food crop with predictable yields year after year on the same fields because soil fertility had been stabilized and vulnerability to the weather reduced by irrigation. By way of contrast, at this time agriculture elsewhere in the world relied chiefly upon slash and burn techniques, as among the Maya of Meso-America, or alternate fallowing of fields as in Medieval Europe. Both methods were comparatively less productive and were vulnerable to drought. Exceptions such as the Nile Valley were enriched annually by flooding but severely limited in the area that could be cultivated.

Wet rice cultivation had other advantages, as anyone who visualizes the crude farm implements and limited pulling power of harnessed draft animals in use a thousand years ago can appreciate. A well-soaked rice field covered with water eased plowing and with puddling allowed an otherwise impossible quality of land preparation. Weeds were partially held in check by an average of four to six inches of water covering the field. Rice was given a head start in seed beds, then the seedlings were transplanted at the age of about four weeks. Moreover, flooding created anaerobic conditions, lowering the Ph level of the predominantly acidic laterite soils of the moist tropics. Although most of his methods are traditional even today, the average rice farmer (in Java and Bali, for example) is a conscientious and accomplished agriculturalist, in comparison with many peasants elsewhere. In the past as in the present, successful cultivation of wet rice land demanded many superior skills, a discipline of work, and expertise in water management.

Such was the dependence upon agriculture and the prestige of the farmer in classical China that the emperor was the first farmer of the realm and each spring plowed the symbolic first furrow. Beginning with the Sui Dynasty in the sixth century A.D., hundreds of thousands of corvee workers, with hoes, baskets slung from carrying poles, and wheelbarrows were mustered to dig the *Yun Ho*, or Grand Canal. Ultimately over a thousand miles long, this largest of all man-made canals allowed barges to carry the immense tax in kind, which was rice, from the valley of the mighty Yangtze River to the imperial courts, first in Kaifeng and Sian and then in Peking, to support their attendant officials, concubines, eunuchs, scholars, and craftsmen. From one century to the next, the cultivation of flooded paddy fields devoted to rice absorbed ever greater inputs of labor and sustained population growth until China's inhabitants early in this millennium numbered about one hundred million. More than any other food crop, rice accounts for the concentration today of more than one-half the human race in relatively small areas of eastern, southeastern, and southern Asia.



When there are workers in the paddy, a pot of tea is never far away.

Mrs. Li Su-Li.

A CHINESE FARM WIFE

by Norma Diamond

How sad it is to be a woman!
Nothing on earth is held so cheap.
Boys stand leaning at the door
Like Gods fallen out of Heaven.
Their hearts brave the Four Oceans,
The wind and dust of a thousand miles.
No one is glad when a girl is born:
By *her* the family sets no store.
When she grows up, she hides in her room
Afraid to look a man in the face.
No one cries when she leaves her home—
Sudden as clouds when the rain stops...

Woman by Fu Hsuan, ca. A.D. 270

In traditional China, and until recent decades, women in all social classes were generally regarded as inferior to males. Throughout their lives it was thought necessary for them to be subject to the authority of men: "unmarried, a woman obeys her father; married, her husband; widowed, her son."

The birth of a daughter was a disappointment in this patriarchal society. Among poor families, it was a disaster and unwanted girls were sometimes killed at birth. Some were given away, adopted by another poor family in which they served as potential brides. Others were sold as indentured servants to the homes of the rich. Somewhat older girls were sold to become concubines to the wealthy, or into winehouses and brothels.

Among the upper classes and in the homes of peasants of substantial means, artisans, and merchants, girls were kept at home until the age of 15 or so, when they became marriageable. Even then, they did not receive the same treatment as their brothers. Girls were denied the same quality of food, clothing, and medical attention that was given to boys; they were expected to take on household chores at an early age; they were denied formal education; and they were required to defer to their brothers. To heighten the girls' awareness of their inferior status, their feet were bound. This was a long and intensely painful process whose purpose was to make the girl more physically attractive and enhance her marriage prospects. Its effect was to incapacitate many girls, rendering them unable to walk any distance or stand for any long period of time. They were effectively crippled for life.

Women had little power in traditional Chinese society, in which both descent and inheritance were patrilineal. Only sons could carry on the family name and produce the future generations which would remember and venerate the ancestors. Only sons inherited land, and only sons were seen as an investment for the future, since it was they who were expected to provide for their aged parents and increase the family wealth. An educated son might even pass one of the governmental examinations and become an official, bringing wealth and fame to the family. Women were not allowed to take the examinations even if by some extraordinary indulgence they had been given an education.

Daughters were proverbially compared to "water spilled on the ground": one spent money to raise them, and then gave them away to some other family. But sometimes a family did not have sons. Then, it was permissible to find a man willing to become an adopted son-in-law (usually someone with no money or prospects), and the daughter he married would be retained at home. At least one of her sons would bear her father's surname, perform rites for her ancestral line, and inherit her father's property. Such women had more power and influence in the household than women married in conventional fashion.

In almost all marriages, the girl joined her husband's family and was primarily identified as a daughter-in-law of the household. Marriages were by family arrangement and romantic considerations were irrelevant. Usually, the couple did not meet until the wedding day. Neither were they consulted about the matter. Both families relied on go-betweens and professional matchmakers: the boy's family looked for a girl of good reputation who could take over the household chores and begin bearing sons soon after marriage. The girl's family hoped for a household somewhat better off than their own and one where their daughter would not have to contend with a cantankerous set of in-laws. A small percentage of girls married a cross-cousin (mother's brother's son or father's sister's son), in which instance she was already on close terms with her future spouse and in-laws.

If the match was a disappointment, the girl and her family accepted it as "fate." The boy's family, if dissatisfied, had the option of divorce on such grounds as barrenness (bearing only daughters was also grounds for divorce), talkativeness, quarrelsomeness, or lack of respect to household members. The first years of marriage could be very difficult for a woman. She was under great pressure to bear sons. She was expected to be obedient, cheerful at all times, uncomplaining, and hard working.

As she grew older, her station in life improved. With the birth of her first son, her status rose. At the death of her mother-in-law she gained some authority in the household. Once past childbearing age, the social restrictions on her were relaxed. Her husband and sons consulted her about most matters. When her sons married, her work load was lightened, she had a daughter-in-law to command, and the junior members of the household indulged her.

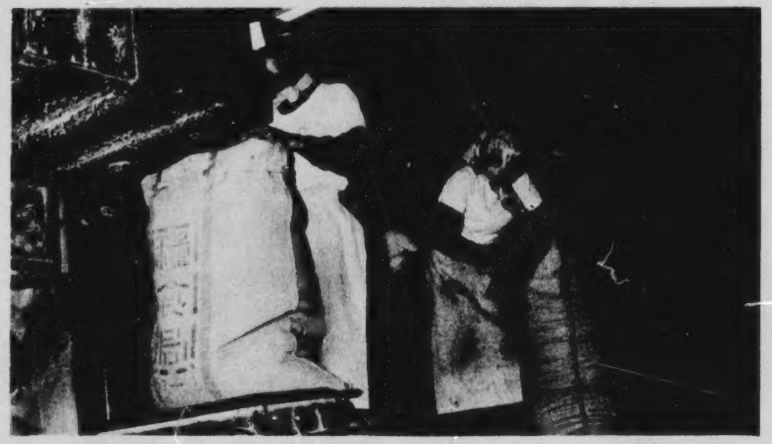
in whatever small luxuries they could afford. At her death, her name was inscribed on an ancestral tablet alongside that of her husband, and the dates of her birth and death were commemorated by her descendants.

This pattern was upheld by the Confucian teachings and the complex body of custom developed over thousands of years of Chinese civilization. Not until the mid-nineteenth century was it seriously challenged. The Taiping Rebellion, a massive peasant uprising, advocated among other things an end to footbinding and concubinage, and granted to women the right to own land, to be educated, to hold political office, and to serve in the military. The Taiping Rebellion was defeated, but by the second decade of the twentieth century some of its goals were being incorporated into law and reflected in the changing institutional structure.

The Western-educated intellectuals of the early twentieth century were critical of Confucian thinking and advocated support of "Mr. Science" and "Mr. Democracy." In the urban centers, women and young people gained new freedoms and rights.

In Taiwan, self-conscious modernization began with Japanese colonial rule in 1895. Women students were included in the new system of government schools. Footbinding was discouraged, as was the practice of adopting unwanted infant girls as child brides. Although the Japanese influence was a socially conservative one, a small number of women were able for the first time to enter the professions and to find jobs in the new factories and offices. And, as more men entered urban occupations, women became more conspicuous in the agricultural sector.

In contemporary Taiwan, which has been under Chinese Nationalist rule since 1946, women can be found in a wide variety of occupations and public roles. The housewife role is still held as the ideal, however, and relatively few women continue to work after marriage except in the rural sector.



Women sew up bags of rice at a mill.

Women in the Rural Sector

In Tsao Tun, Mrs. Li is not only a housewife but also a farm manager. Since her husband holds an urban job, she must supervise the hired labor teams during the busy seasons and participate in much of the farm work as well as carry out the expected household tasks of child care, cooking, cleaning, and laundry. The breakdown of the extended family even among wealthier peasants and the fact that Mrs. Li's eldest son is still too young to be married leaves her without sisters-in-law or a daughter-in-law to share the domestic burden.

Her role as supervisor and decision-maker is quite different from the traditional woman's role. Traditional values assert that woman's work is "inside," and in the past, respectable women did not venture beyond the courtyard gates or talk to men who were not kinsmen. In reality, peasant women everywhere in China were pushed beyond the gates by economic necessity to make some contribution to agricultural production. In most peasant families, the labor of women (and children) was essential during planting, harvesting, and threshing. In the tea- and cotton-growing regions of China, most of the labor on these cash crops was provided by women. The rural silk industry, in all its stages, was also staffed by women. Almost everywhere women were routinely responsible for the family's pigs and poultry. The ownership of land, tools, and livestock, however, was in the hands of male household members: women and children were, in a sense, unpaid family workers. Even today, when women take on the job of farm management, that continues to be the case.

Film Dialogue

It is up to me to take care of all the odds and ends on the farm.

Mrs. Li

Film Dialogue

Our farm is about three acres, mainly of rice and tobacco. We grow two rice crops a year.

My son is away for two years in the military. My three other daughters are in school and cannot help very much on the farm, although they do a few chores when they can.

Mrs. Li

Film Dialogue

"Mother, Mother, We love you. You teach us to be hardworking."

Before industrialization, rural women supplemented household earnings by home production of handicrafts or by working as servants for the rich. Now many farm daughters work in city factories and service occupations such as barbering or tailoring. The less fortunate add to household income as coffee house attendants, bar-girls, and prostitutes in the big cities. Those who stay in the countryside sometimes join work teams that hire out to other families during planting and harvest seasons or engage in the heavy labor of road repairs and building construction.

The earnings from this "outside" work are usually controlled by the men of the household, at least in part. Even so, women who bring in earnings have more say about their own lives and about household decisions. The extent to which women work "outside" varies, even in Taiwan: it is more common in the central and southern regions than in the north for a woman to work in agriculture. The kind of work she does also depends on the social standing of her household and on local custom. Generally, the wealthier a family is, the more it cleaves to the ideal that women's work is limited to domestic chores in and around the house.

This ideal is reflected in how families report the occupation of household members in the yearly police census records. Many women are listed as housewives although their domestic role encompasses farm work, tending the family shop, or participation in handicraft production. In the Taichung county area, which is still heavily rural, only 43.7 per cent of adult women are considered to be "employed" and many of these are further listed as unpaid family workers. Very few are listed as "household heads," unless widowed, yet husbands or grown sons are often working far from home. Despite their role as farm managers, only a tiny percentage (.5 per cent) are described as "agricultural employers."*

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*1971 Taiwan Demographic Fact Book, p. 292.

Film Dialogue

My husband, Li Su-li, works set hours in the glove factory. He leaves at 7:30 in the morning and returns just after six.

Given these statistics, Mrs. Li's current lifestyle might seem, at first glance, to be atypical. But women have always worked in agriculture in the central Taiwan region. The expansion of the domestic role to include more agricultural work is a reflection both of the increasing tendency for more males and younger household members to seek urban employment and of the shrinking importance of farm production for total household income. In many rural households, it is farming which is the secondary occupation, and as such, it can be left to the women. In other words, it is not that the status of women has suddenly risen but rather that the importance of agriculture has fallen and men seek more prestigious, and well-paying jobs in the towns and cities.*

Males employed outside the village try to return to participate during the busiest agricultural seasons, but the shortage of labor in the countryside is acute. Mrs. Li now hires soldiers to help her, as well as neighbors. She would probably do better financially to hire women since they are customarily paid less. In 1971, the day wage for a male laborer was around $80 Taiwan (about US$2.00) plus all meals and snacks, while a woman laborer was paid only $50 and did not receive an evening meal. These costs too are rising, owing to growing awareness of the higher wages for unskilled city jobs, and even the household workforce is starting to think in terms of cash payment. As Wang and Apthorpe report from central Taiwan:

> I saw a father distributing wages to his wife and children as if their work was considered as overtime. He explained that his wife and children shared in the family's farmwork as a matter of course in the daytime but if he asked them to do farmwork at night it would go beyond what is proper if he did not pay them for overtime. Once he forgot to pay an overtime wage to his wife during harvesting. She went on strike. She just dressed up and sat in the house watching television. Her husband had to hire other laborers. It did not pay him (p. 179).

Film Dialogue

Mrs. Li: *Farm laborers are in short supply. We applied to the army for help, and some soldiers have been helping us. Getting help is very difficult.*

Q: *How many are working today?*

Mrs. Li: *This morning with the soldiers included, we had seventeen.*

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*In a recent study of farm households in northern, central, and southern Taiwan, it was estimated that 39.3 to 51.8 per cent of rural household income was coming from nonfarm occupations by resident members, with another 8 to 25 per cent gained in the form of remittances from former members. In the area near Tsao Tun, farm income accounted, on the average, for only 27.6 per cent of household income. Wang and Apthorpe, 1974, p. 13.

For daughters in rural families, the lure of working in industry is strong. Most young factory women are from rural backgrounds originally: though their labor is needed at home they can earn far more money in industry for the household and some pocket money for themselves. Unskilled factory women earn about $50 (US$1.05) a day, year round, not just at planting and harvest, and the work is easier.

Women and the Family

While there is still a preference for having sons, daughters are now seen as having some economic value, even if they earn less than their brothers. In addition, they are useful as they were in the past in taking on many of the domestic chores. Boys are customarily excused from most household work (unless they are so unfortunate as to have no sisters at all) and little girls begin early to help with the cooking, cleaning, laundry, feeding of livestock, and care of their younger brothers and sisters. Although heavier responsibilities are placed on them at an early age, their childhood is often recollected as a time of affection and indulgence. Relations with their mother and siblings are close. They are indulged and pampered by their grandparents, and, because it is expected that they will leave the household for marriage, their father is likely to be less strict or distant with them compared to the way he treats their brothers.

Girls today also have the advantage of attending school, at least for the first six years of primary education which are compulsory. Parents now agree that daughters need at least a primary school certificate in order to make a good marriage. It is also a requirement for the factory job which most girls expect to hold during the years between graduation and marriage.

Relatively few rural girls continue beyond primary school. In the Tsao Tun area, only 6.2 per cent of women over 15 were graduates of a junior high school or currently in attendance, as compared to 13.2 per cent of the men. At the senior high school level the proportion of educated women falls even lower, one per cent as compared to 5 per cent of the men.* Most girls take a job after completing primary school, or remain at home until they are ready to marry.

Some changes are also occurring in the arranging and conducting of marriages, particularly in the large cities. There, patterns of dating, courtship, and individual choice are slowly starting to be accepted by the more educated urban dwellers. In the countryside, modified forms of parentally arranged marriages are regarded as the "modern" way. Under the influence of Japanese popular culture, the custom of the *miai* was adopted. It is an arranged meeting between the prospective bride and groom prior to the finalization of any engagement agreement. The potential spouses are located, still, by the efforts of a go-between or matchmaker, and the initial meeting takes place under her direction and in the presence of parents or other kinsmen. There is little real conversation between the young people; it is often an awkward and strained encounter. The young people size each other up as best they can, and convey their opinion to their parents. Generally their judgments are respected, although it is not good for a girl to refuse too many of the suitors presented to her.

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*1971 Taiwan Demographic Fact Book, pp. 228-229.

Some love matches occur. Attendance at school, contacts at work, or through Four-H Club activities provide opportunities for young people to meet and make their own choices. Even in the case of a love match the families may decide to present it to the community as an arranged marriage, hiring a go-between and setting up a *miai* meeting.

Once the couple are engaged some dating is permitted. The couple are seen together publicly, and the boy visits the girl's home. This newly granted freedom is probably a result of the later age for marriage: boys rarely marry before they have finished their military service (about age 21 or 22), and girls tend to marry now in their early twenties rather than in their teens.

The later age at marriage, coupled with the economic advances in Taiwan during the past few decades, also leads to expectations of a larger dowry. When the bride moves to the groom's home at marriage, she is expected to come with a large amount of household goods, appliances, clothing, cosmetics, and small luxuries such as a phonograph or TV set. Because of women's increased ability to earn money, a large part of the dowry represents her saved wages and remittances put aside for that purpose by parents. Some of the dowry is purchased with money presented by the man's family as engagement gifts. A respectable family will match that sum with their own to make up the dowry, or even go beyond it. The wealthier the family, the greater the overall expenditure and the proportion of dowry paid by the bride's side.

An impressive dowry not only smoothes the bride's way into her husband's family but also enhances her own family's reputation. The dowry goods are transported to the groom's house on open trucks, carts, or carrying trays, displayed so that all the neighbors and passers-by can see and evaluate them.

Marriage procedures vary. Rural brides wear a rented, Western-style white wedding gown like their city sisters, and leave their parents' home in a taxi rather than a closed sedan chair. Some families are now content with a civil ceremony or Christian church marriage, but that is more a city phenomenon. In the rural areas, the major ceremonies take place at the groom's home, where a large feast is prepared for his relatives and family friends so that the bride can be introduced to his social network. She is also introduced to his ancestors on this day, bowing with him before his family altar. The groom's party are festive, but the bride is expected to keep an impassive and somber demeanor: she may even look as if it were a tragic occasion for her.

Within a few days, the bride makes a brief visit home, accompanied by the groom and some of his friends and relatives. A less elaborate feast is prepared by the bride's family, and the marriage announced to her ancestors. In some cases the groom accompanies the bride on her initial departure from her parental home, and the announcement to the ancestors is made at that time.

The costs of a dowry and wedding feast are high. In the past it was much more common for families to avoid these costs by arranging a *sim-pua* marriage. The girl was brought to her future home as a small child, or even while a nursing infant, to be raised as a member of the family as well as an incoming daughter-in-law. Sometimes the boy for whom she was destined had already been born, but sometimes she was adopted in hope that she would "lead in a son." It was not unusual to see an eight-year-old *sim-pua* trundling her infant husband around on her back and catering to his babyish demands.

In many cases *sim-pua* were not treated as well as real daughters of the household. They were given heavy workloads to compensate for the cost of raising them and for the absence of dowry. There was no wedding feast: the marriage was formalized, as soon as both of them were considered old enough for sexual relations, by giving them the same bedroom.

Film Dialogue

Miss Wu: *Girls are bound to get married sometime. When do you want your first baby?*

Such adoptions still take place but result less often in marriage. The young people themselves are resistant to the arrangement and have the law on their side. Because some families are unwilling to provide a costly conventional marriage for these girls, and because they want their "investment" back, a disproportionate number of former *sim-pua* end up in houses of prostitution.

When the bride joins her new family she takes over many of the household chores and farm tasks. She and her husband are given a room of their own within the family compound, and they cook and eat together with the rest of the household. All earnings are pooled, and allowances are doled out by the household head.

The relationship between a woman and her mother-in-law is regarded as a potentially tense one, particularly in the first few years of marriage as the women adjust to each other. If the men are working away from home, which is increasingly likely these days, the women usually recognize that they are dependent on each other for company as well as daily cooperation. The mother-in-law's behavior is also tempered by the threat that her son may move his wife and children to the city if life is too unpleasant in the village.

The relations between husband and wife were traditionally more distant. A man's first loyalty was to his parents and brothers, and a woman was expected to serve her in-laws rather than trying to build a close relationship with her husband. A man sided with his parents in any household dispute, punished his wife at their bidding, divorced her at their request, and did not show affection to his wife in the presence of others. Despite these social expectations, there were always couples who formed bonds of love and trust. They are even more likely to do so now as a result of the influence of the mass media. Taiwan television, movies, and popular songs stress the new ideas of love and romance, and people hope their marriages will develop into "love matches," even if they don't start out that way.

The majority of households, including those in the rural areas, consist of a husband, his wife and children, and perhaps his parents. This is true even where there has not been migration out of the community by the head's brothers, uncles, or cousins. Most households are relatively simple in composition as a result of division: earnings are no longer pooled, and each nuclear unit cooks and eats apart from the others although they may continue to share the same compound dwelling. These divisions are often attributed to the disputes between the women. More probably they are the result of insufficient property holdings to sustain a large family, and the growing concern of both husband and wife in each nuclear unit for the welfare of their own children. Admittedly, women are more strongly identified with the nuclear unit than with the larger extended family and have more freedoms to gain if they are the supervisors of their domestic world.

Film Dialogue

Mrs. Li: *Ancestors believed big families brought wealth, small families meant loneliness.*

Miss Wu: *But today that is wrong. The more children you have, the more trouble you have. You won't have enough time to feed them.*

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Film Dialogue

Miss Wu: *Whether your children are boys or girls is not important. They need not be only boys. Boys and girls should be considered as equal.*

Formal division does not end cooperation between the units. There is still the expectation of labor exchange in agriculture, child care, and preparation of special foods at festival time. If not, the woman's work burden can be overwhelming.

Women have more equality in the smaller family units. They eat together with the males of the household rather than eating separately, and they have the opportunity to express their opinions more freely and to influence decisions.

Whether living in a small nuclear unit or in an extended family, women forge strong relationships with their children, particularly with their sons. Fathers are respected and feared as figures of authority, but mothers are loved. The children's wishes and desires, if expressed at all, are more likely to be confided to their mother and she in turn will tactfully persuade their father to agree. Her children are her world; they are her future security and she is emotionally close to them.

Women and Lineage Organization

The women's world is the small family, not the lineage. Unlike other societies with unilineal descent groups, women have no role to play in lineage ceremonies or management beyond mourning obligations for their close kin in their lineage of birth. Within their husband's lineage, they also have mourning obligations, in this case to a much wider network of kinsmen, and after death they will be mourned by their husband's lineage kin within five degrees of relationship. But they are not really members of their husband's lineage except insofar as they are married to a member of the lineage and mother to members of the lineage. They do not hold office within the lineage, they do not attend lineage ceremonies, and in some areas they are not even allowed inside the lineage ancestral hall except on their wedding day and when they are lying in their coffin.

Lineage organization is less developed in central and southern Taiwan than in the north or in coastal Fukkien from which Taiwanese culture is derived. Many villages have no ancestral halls for storing memorial tablets of the ancestors and their wives. Tsao Tun does; in fact, the Li family inhabit one wing of the building, the other wing has been converted to tobacco drying sheds, but the central portion still functions as a temple for the local Li descendants.

Where lineage organization is weak, ancestral tablets are not usually kept beyond three generations, and they are displayed on an altar table in the main room of the house. The daily burning of incense and offering of foods is just as likely to fail to the women and children of the household. It ceases to be an important element of an all-male cult.

Religious Life

In many Taiwan villages religious life centers not so much around ancestor commemoration as around the god-figures housed in community temples and private homes. Women are frequent visitors to the temples and altars. At the periodic festivals for the gods, they participate in a number of ways. They are in charge of the major food preparations for the festivals, and after it has been ritually offered to the gods and their attendants, they join in the feasting (unlike lineage feasts, from which women are excluded). Women are free to observe the ceremonies and rituals carried out by lay-specialists or Taoist priests, they attend the community-sponsored opera troupe or puppet show invited to amuse the gods, and they share a deep interest in the proceedings.

Women are similarly involved in the calendrical round of festivals: New Years, Seventh Month Feast of the Souls, the mid-Autumn Festival. Teams of young women compete in the Dragon-Boat Festival or march in religious processions, and young girls are often drawn into performing groups which sing and dance in costume to entertain the gods.

The occurrence of festivals gives women a legitimate reason to travel to their natal village and to see their own kinsmen and old friends. Visits to special temples in the cities, such as that for the Goddess of Childbirth or various gods of diseases, are also approved reasons for travel.

Shamanistic practice is common in Taiwan, and some of the shamans are women. In trance, they give advice and prophesy as spokeswomen for some particular god and receive payment from their devotees.

The power-positions connected to religious life are overwhelmingly held by men. Women are furthermore barred from some aspects of religious activity because they are viewed as polluted (by menstruation and childbirth) and in some way dangerous to themselves or to the outcome of religious observances. As in economic and family life, women are vital to the continuance of the system, they may exert influence on a personal level, but they do not have authority.

Community and Political Life

The village is, in a sense, a religious community. It is also a neighborhood or combination of neighborhoods. Brides arrive as strangers, theoretically, but they do not remain strangers for long.

Some of the village women are already somewhat familiar to the bride because they originate from her home village. Others may be kinswomen. Even if she knows no one, the new bride will soon find friends. Peasant women have rarely been as secluded as women of the upper classes, and it is only now, as modernization advances, that rural women find themselves in danger of being cut off from neighborly contacts. Women's domestic chores often take place out of doors. Until the introduction of running water in the villages, women gather daily at the riverside or well to do their laundry together and chat back and forth. Until the acquisition of a gas or electric stove, women do at least some of their cooking on small charcoal-burning stoves in the doorway or courtyard of their homes where they can greet passers-by. Until the family buys a refrigerator, there is reason to go marketing every day, pausing to talk with other women. And until the family buys electric fans, there is good reason on hot summer afternoons to gather together under a large shade tree or near some small family-owned shop to sew and mend in company with others.

There is also a fair amount of informal visiting among women of neighboring households. They depend on each other for small loans of money, some suddenly remembered ingredient for the evening meal, or temporary child-care services. Most women can point to one or two others whom they designate as close friends.*

The friendship groups into which women merge crosscut age to some extent, thus giving the woman allies in her mother-in-law's generation. They also cut across the kinship affiliations of the village men so that women are more likely to know the private problems and doings of nonrelated households to a much greater extent than the menfolk. The opinions and evaluations that emerge in the women's groups have an influence on village political life.

The area of life in which women are least visible, however, is the political life of the village and the surrounding region. Their influence is at the informal level and through their personal ties to husbands, sons, and other male kinsmen.

*As Margery Wolf points out, even in the male-dominated lineage villages of the north there is an informal women's community, a network of personal relationships which enable women to integrate into their new home and which offer some protection against mistreatment by husband and other household members. "Face," or public moral reputation, is still an important feature of life and gossip continues to be a powerful check on behavior. Unreasonable behavior toward a new daughter-in-law is soon discovered by the village women and becomes a prime topic of conversation. The critical airing of family matters is usually sufficient to remedy the situation.

Within the Farmers Associations that enroll some 90 percent of the farming families, leadership is in the hands of men even though women play an important part in farm labor and farm management. The activities sponsored for women are generally limited to such things as cooking classes, sewing and embroidery instruction, training in basic health and infant care. As yet, there seems to be little enthusiasm for training farm women to drive tractors or repair machinery, and little recognition that their involvement in agriculture should give them more influence in the Farmers' Associations. This set of attitudes is reflected in the Four-H Clubs for rural youth, which teach agricultural technology to the boys and domestic science to the girls.

Leadership within the village is clearly in the hands of men. The official authorities—the village section heads (*li-chang*) and neighborhood heads (*lin-chang*)—are men, presumably because most are literate, have some leisure time, and are able to deal with various governmental offices and official forms. The informal leadership in some villages originates from lineage organization: the older, propertied males hold power and not only administer lineage matters but hold official public offices in the community as well. In other villages informal leadership is organized around the village temple, with an all-male committee chosen from the various sections of the village administering temple activities and any property owned in the temple's name.

Women have suffrage rights in official elections but that is generally the extent of their formal political participation. Some women in the cities have been elected to the city council or provincial assembly. A few women sit in the National Assembly by appointment or to replace a deceased husband (an election for the full National Assembly has not been held since 1946), and some women have been appointed to the law courts or other governmental bodies. But the rural villages are not yet ready for women to take a public role in leadership and decision-making.

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As a result both of local conditions and increasing modernization, the women of rural Taiwan are economically productive and socially active in comparison to what women in other areas of China have been traditionally. And while they benefit from the island's generally high standard of living, their overall status lags behind in comparison to women in the People's Republic of China, where the social revolution has been far-reaching. Women in Taiwan are not socially rewarded for what they do, they are still seen as less able or competent than men, and only a few are enabled to fulfill their actual potential.

TAIWAN

5

Beliefs

FARMERS' COOPERATIVES IN TAIWAN

by ALBERT RAVENHOLT

Situated in the lower valley region of Nan Tou County in Central Taiwan, the township of Tsao Tun, meaning "straw shoes," has almost classical Chinese scenic setting. To the east rise successive ranges of hills and mountains that ultimately reach an elevation of 14,000 feet. Their numerous rivers provide the irrigation water that is fundamental to intensive cropping of farms that average one *chia*, or two and one-half acres. Since this region first was cleared of forest and occupied by settlers from the mainland of China nearly three centuries ago, terraced paddy fields have been steadily extended up the mountain slopes. Like the brick houses with tiled roofs built around courtyards, the canals and roads laid up with rock show the accretions of generations of laborious construction. In total land area the township covers 10,448 hectares (one hectare equals 2.47 acres) of which roughly one-half is cultivated, yielding chiefly rice, tobacco, mushrooms, pineapple, bamboo shoots, oranges, lichees, and pears. Pigs and poultry, too, are important farm products. Since this region lies almost directly under the Tropic of Cancer, an annual average rainfall of approximately 100 inches supports a verdant landscape that gives the countryside a sense of lush agricultural abundance. Only occasionally in summer do fierce typhoons sweeping in from the Pacific force their way through the mountains to devastate crops and wash out dikes and bridges on this western plain.

Farmers' Association headquarters, Tsao Tun.

The Farmers' Association, whose headquarters today occupy the most imposing building in Tsao Tun Town, started in 1914 as a Chinese credit union (*hui*) to mobilize funds for promoting local business. It has been reorganized repeatedly in keeping with growth of the community and changing official policy, first under the Japanese and since 1945 in accordance with the Chinese authorities' rural objectives. Membership today numbers over 9,600 of whom nearly 80 per cent are entitled to vote because their principal income is from farming. This is in keeping with the pattern throughout Taiwan, where more than 90 per cent of all farmers belong to such cooperatives that now include a total of 901,264 rural families as members.

Agricultural Cooperatives in Taiwan

Cooperatives, known as Farmers' Associations, have been the crucial instrument for modernizing agriculture on Taiwan during the past quarter of a century. Through these rural organizations were introduced the means for making the island's fields, on an annual average, the most productive in Asia. Cooperatives provided credit, fertilizer and insecticides, improved processing and marketing and, most vital of all, innovative ideas such as able

Banking and Lending Department of the Farmers' Association.

extension technicians can supply when compelled to match their knowledge of farming to practical prospects. While the 328 multipurpose township Farmers' Associations in Taiwan are at the core of community economic life, other cooperatives also are important. Irrigation Associations maintain the canals and ponds and control water distribution, a service as delicate socially as it is critical to production, especially for good rice crops. Other associations manage the marketing of fruit or fish while some cooperatives promote specialized industries such as the raising of dairy and beef cattle. Community Associations provide potable drinking water and support health centers.

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Such a many-faceted role makes the Tsao Tun Township Farmers' Association in Central Taiwan the center of material wellbeing and much social activity among the 72,000 inhabitants of the community, two-thirds of whom are engaged in agriculture. These cooperatives foster continued private ownership of land, livestock, and equipment needed for production by freeing farmers from the need to go to the usurious money lenders. Profits from dealing in agricultural produce that otherwise would go to private middlemen and merchants instead go to the cooperative and are distributed to farmers. In turn this makes for more independent minded farmers willing and able to digest new technology, encouraging also a greater pride in farming.

Background

In Europe and America cooperatives emerged first as popular movements by rural producers and urban consumers to mobilize strength in the marketplace through organizing "the little people." Acting in combination, the members aimed to achieve bargaining power in dealing with large corporations, economy of scale in operations, and greater protection of common interests. By contrast, Farmers' Associations in Taiwan were organized by the Japanese administration in order to control rural economic life during the period from 1895 to the end of World War II in 1945. Colonial officials did utilize the Farmers' Associations for distributing improved rice seed and, later, fertilizer. Their primary interest, however, was in insuring effective collection at stable prices of rice and other farm products, principally for export to Japan. In keeping with the Japanese practice of seeking to control the populace through family clan heads, the *pao chia*, these township Farmers' Associations were managed by and often for the benefit of the few large landowners and some leading businessmen of each community.

The JCRR

A new era opened for ordinary farmers in Taiwan in 1949-50, that was to remake much of their lives. The Chinese and American Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction (JCRR), which had retreated from the mainland with the Chinese Nationalist government as the Red Armies advanced, turned its energies toward accomplishing upon Taiwan what it had been denied time for on the mainland; building a productive and healthy rural society. Chartered by an act of the U.S. Congress in 1948 and formally established through an exchange of diplomatic notes between the Nationalist Chinese and United States governments, the JCRR was directed by a five-man Commission appointed by the presidents of the two countries. The three Chinese included the Chairman, Dr. Chiang Mon Lin, who for 26 years had been chancellor of Peking National University, China's leading intellectual center. The two American commissioners and nearly a dozen American specialists who worked with about 10 times that number of able Chinese scientists and technicians helped create a unique instrument for utilizing foreign assistance. The Commission acted only upon projects agreed to by all five men—a means to deflect political pressure from both sides. At a time when inflation impoverished most civil servants in China, the JCRR staff was adequately paid and encouraged to try new ideas. Functioning much like a philanthropic foundation and monitoring progress as money was paid out, the Commission funded "sponsoring agencies" that ranged from agricultural research stations to groups of farmers organized in a forest protective association. The Commission thus minimized obstruction by the then largely ineffective Chinese bureaucracy and brought United States' assistance directly to benefit farmers.

As the first step of its program to achieve greater social justice in the countryside, the JCRR worked with General Chen Cheng, the governor of Taiwan, to engineer a thorough land reform. This was accomplished in three stages, beginning in 1949 with a reduction of all rents to a maximum of 37.5 per cent of the main crop and affording all tenants security of tenure through written leases. Land commissions representing tenants, landlords, and owner-operators were elected in every township to arbitrate disputes. In

Power tilling a rice field.

the second phase the government sold to tenant farmers much of the cultivated land it had taken over from the Japanese in 1945 when Taiwan was returned to Chinese administration. The "land to the tiller" program inaugurated in 1953 involved government purchase of all land in excess of seven and one-half acres of irrigated land or 15 acres of dry cultivated land owned by a single family. This was resold to tenants, who paid in 20 installments over ten years. All fields had been surveyed and classified according to productivity. The price was fixed at two and one-half times the total annual production. Landlords were paid 30 per cent with stock in government corporations that now have become private and 70 per cent in land bonds, valued in rice to guard against inflation.The result was a peaceful transformation of rural Taiwan with most farmers becoming owner-operators of individual small farms, possessed of the incentives and pride in performance that this generates.

As the gentry lost both their land and traditional role in the countryside, they also ceased to function as the dependable moneylenders to farmers who formerly had been their tenants. The role of former landlords, who frequently were businessmen dealing in agricultural produce, sometimes as directors of the Farmers' Associations, likewise became obsolete. Thus, the opportunity and necessity for a reorganization of the Farmers' Associations became an essential feature of rural modernization. In collaboration with relevant government agencies, the Farmers' Service Division of the JCRR designed a restructuring of the Farmers' Associations which became law in 1952. Subsequent changes were made to adapt the cooperatives to new technologies and economies with the accelerating shift from a largely subsistence type to an increasingly commercialized agriculture.

Fundamental to converting the Farmers' Associations into genuine cooperatives was insuring control by actual farmers; only in this manner could organizations with such a critical role be compelled to respond promptly to "felt needs" of rural folk. Under the new regulations, only those who derived more than one-half of their income from their own farming operations were eligible to vote. Other families in the community could join as associate members. All members were required to subscribe and pay for shares of stock and fulfill their obligations in payment of fees and compliance with business contracts. Only one person in a qualified household can vote in the nearly 200-member Small Agricultural Units whose elected representatives then choose the Board of Directors of the Farmers' Associations. The directors of the 328 township Farmers' Associations, in turn elect the directors of the 20 county and city Farmers' Associations, who are joined in a single Provincial Farmers' Association. A vital innovation in the 1952 reorganization of the Farmers' Association was making these cooperatives responsible for extension; technicians employed to help farmers modernize their methods thereby were paid indirectly by those farmers and consequently had an added incentive to

Fertilizing a rice paddy.

Board of Director's meeting.

show results. Because of conflicting legislation that already had created a separate government agency chiefly involved in cooperative banking, the Farmers' Associations were unable to adopt in their formal English translation the designation of "cooperative." However, in Chinese the term *nung hui* has this meaning and organizationally they fulfill requirements of member-owned and managed cooperatives.

With enhanced authority and more complex operations by the Farmers' Associations, it became essential to educate the new directors and elected officers, the professional staff they employed, and, in time, the farmer-members. This was accomplished by the JCRR and the Provincial Government bureaus concerned through an island-wide series of intensive seminars and short courses. Included were accounting, business law, supervision of credit extended to farmers, storage and milling of rice, and the many specialized functions that come with extension of new methods to farmers. Education and enlistment of youth in agriculture also become a concern of the Farmers' Associations when they organized the Four-H Clubs to develop rural leadership. Initially, the government extended low-interest loans to Farmers' Associations for enlargement of warehouses and improvement of milling and other processing facilities. Farmers' Associations were gradually strengthened financially by reducing the portion of the annual surplus from operations distributed to members and retaining instead larger sums in the reserve funds. Until recently, the cooperatives also managed the exchange of chemical fertilizer for rice from the Provincial Food Bureau. The exchange ratio was a chronic source of grievance among farmers, who wanted a shift to the now freer market economy. As among farmers in most countries, the high cost of fertilizer is a common complaint in rural Taiwan, although domestic sources of natural gas have kept the cost of nitrogen below world levels. Otherwise, government supervision of the cooperatives usually is limited to periodic auditing of account books and insuring that management is in accordance with established regulations. At the township level operations also are scrutinized by a separate board of supervisors chosen by secret ballot, as is the board of directors.

Co-op Services in Tsao Tun

As a multipurpose cooperative, the Tsao Tun Township Farmers' Association serves its members through its specialized sections functioning under a professional general manager, who is responsible both to the elected board of directors and the equally concerned board of supervisors reviewing operations. Like most farmer-members, Hong Tung-hai banks at the Farmers' Association. A major effort is made to encourage farm families to save money and place it on time deposit, rather than spending heavily on *bai bai* and other village circuses and feasts. Farmer-members can borrow through the Credit Section for crop loans, purchase of equipment and livestock, and for improvements on their homesteads. Most loans are made without collateral, but are guaranteed by two or more other members. A special credit committee rates all members, and loans for productive purposes receive priority.

Farmers normally bring their harvested rice to the cooperatives' warehouses for rodent- and insect-free weatherproof storage. Farmers' Associations in Taiwan operate 416 rice mills with a combined daily capacity of 8,000 metric tons, more than sufficient to mill the total annual production. Manufacturing feed, especially for hogs and poultry, is a rapidly growing business for Farmers' Associations, as in Tsao Tun Township where they have just constructed a modern new mill. Bran from rice milling is ground with imported corn, soya bean meal left after pressing out the oil, minerals, and other ingredients carefully designed to meet nutritional specifications. Other cooperatives operate plants for hulling peanuts, chopping sweet potatoes that may be made into starch or fed to hogs, ginning cotton, and curing and packaging tea, a noted export from Taiwan. Marketing is another important function of the Farmers' Associations, designed to maximize returns to the grower. While the cooperative in Tsao Tun handles specialized crops such as jute, most marketing is of rice and hogs.

The Consumers' Store operated by the Tsao Tun Township Farmers' Association offers revealing insights into the pattern of rising rural living standards. Purchasing services aim first to supply farmers, on time and at reasonable cost, with reliable seed, implements, pesticides, plastic to cover their greenhouses and mushroom-growing sheds, and specialized equipment, such as the sprayer used by Farmer Hong Tsung-ming. In addition to such daily necessities as canned foodstuffs, rice, soap, towels, toothbrushes, and cloth, the Consumers' Store does a growing business in radios, record players, electric fans, television sets, and

Film Dialogue

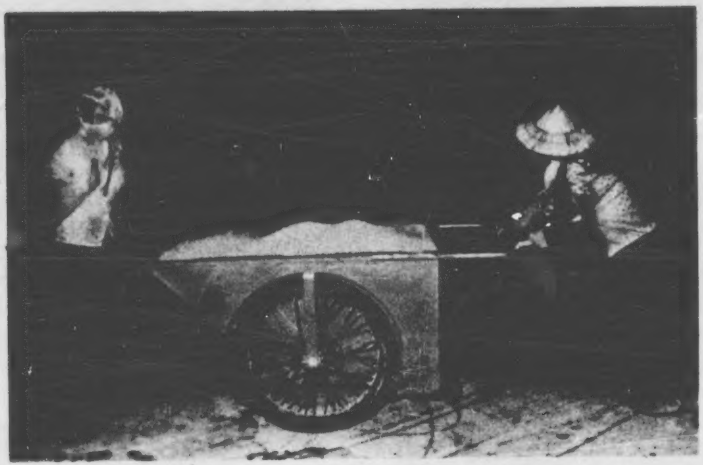
Farmer: *This year the Association insecticides are worse than last year's.*

Technician: *This one takes effect immediately whereas our brand takes longer.*

Farmer: *Effective insecticides are those that work immediately. That is the way we tell. How should I know those that take a few days to take effect?*

Technician: *This commercial brand takes effect immediately. But the Farmers' Association brand only takes effect after a few days. So, have you taken this into account?*

Farmer: *That is beside the point. The Farmers' Association should serve the farmers. The Association insecticide should be a better quality and cheaper than the commercial brands. This should be the Association policy. So you say your insecticide takes effect after a few days. That is no good. We want quick results. Other insecticides take effect immediately. Why doesn't yours? We should benefit from your services.*



Top: Women wheeling rice at the Cooperative-run mill; Center: Borrowing money at the Cooperative's loan department; Bottom: The Farmers' Cooperative operates a consumer store.

refrigerators, all among the prized possessions that come with recent prosperity. The Tsao Tun cooperative operates a bicycle delivery service for home delivery of goods to busy farmer-members, who sometimes place orders by telephone. As the Consumers' Store expands, it helps stabilize prices of commodities in the many private shops in Tsao Tun, since their owners know that if they charge customers too much the cooperative may stock similar items at lower cost.

FILM LINK

Tsao Tun Township's Vegetable Wholesale Market, designed to free growers from middlemen who otherwise would be able to dictate prices, is managed by a special section of the Farmers' Association. Early each weekday morning, buyers come here from the larger cities to bid by lot for auctioned produce. (Farmers with smaller landholdings or abundant family labor favor growing vegetables, since they yield a high return from small plots.) Farmers' Associations in Taiwan increasingly are engaged in processing, drying, canning and, more recently, freezing vegetables and fruits. The biggest volume is in mushrooms, now totaling over 60,000 metric tons annually, and asparagus, of which some 90,000 metric tons are grown per year. Fruits for export are important to the rural economy, especially pineapples for canning, bananas for shipment to Japan, and the thin-skinned Ponkan orange that ripens in winter and is prized abroad. The giant Kaohsiung Fruit Marketing Cooperative in Southern Taiwan has 1,626 full-time employees serving 57,149 members, most of whom are banana growers.

Another special section of the cooperative provides livestock insurance for farmers in Tsao Tun Township. Despite the best of care, any farmer raising pigs risks loss of part or all of his animals from disease. Because the hog industry has grown from a family sideline, where animals often were fed on scraps and leftovers

Farmers' Cooperative vegetable auction.

from the kitchen, to an intensive enterprise requiring large investments in pens, sows, purchased feed, and much else, this risk has become critical. Confronted with the prospect of a catastrophe, many farmers increasingly were fearful of embarking upon expanded pig production. As this situation became more acute, it appeared that in the future only unusually wealthy farmers or larger corporations could survive such hazards. With livestock insurance now available from the cooperative, hog farmers at least can minimize risks and there is a better opportunity for the small grower. Along with providing insurance, however, the Farmers' Association insists that a livestock grower must follow improved practices of sanitation, vaccinate his animals, and otherwise give them the best possible care.

Ripening mangoes.

Changing the Farm Economy

Agricultural productivity per land unit in Taiwan has more than doubled since 1952 and income per farm family has approximately tripled. An evaluation by the JCRR indicates that roughly two-thirds of this increase is due to technological improvements and only one-third to farmers' use of greater inputs such as fertilizer, capital improvements, and added labor. This revolution in farming methods and technology was made possible chiefly by the Farmers' Associations' extension service personnel. Bringing the improved practices and ideas developed at experiment stations and universities to the countryside, these men and women help make them a reality. In Tsao Tun specialists in the extension section of the cooperative are on call at any time to help members. Veterinarians assist farmer-members whose animals and fowl show symptoms of illness or have other problems; entomologists advise on crop protection; agronomists encourage improved crop cultivation. Occasionally, the specialists may be called to account, as by Farmer Hong Tsung-ming, when an insecticide or other product provided by the Farmers' Association fails to perform satisfactorily.

FILM LINK

Introduction of new crops poses a special challenge to the cooperative's extension technicians. Such is the case with Tsao Tun's venture in growing tatami grass to provide the traditional floor covering desired in Japan. It started when Farmers' Association management learned that most Japanese dislike the nylon "tatami" they increasingly are compelled to buy as costs of growing the natural grass in Japan skyrocket with rising wages. A study indicated possibilities for growing tatami grass in Central Taiwan and the cooperative recruited members interested in trying this new crop. Special nets to hold it upright in the field and considerable skill are required to grow this tatami grass successfully and extension specialists who have encouraged farmers inevitably have a major responsibility for the results.

Improving life in rural homes is a prime concern of the cooperative's extension section in Tsao Tun; it is especially significant since Chinese girls in this younger generation become reluctant to marry farmers and instead prefer to find husbands working fixed hours in factories and offices. So, when possible, Association activities are centered in the home, including meetings of the small farmers' study groups. Meeting at night with extension specialists the entire family may discuss selected opportunities such as diversified farming, allowing inter-cropping of melons and vegetables with rice, farm mechanization, poultry, upland crops, and fruit growing. Women in the extension section organize farm wives to participate in cooking contests, like the one Mrs. Li Su-li* attended. They help modernize farm kitchens and teach rural women to sew more attractive clothes, while sometimes offering hints on how to keep the farm cleaner and eliminate flies. Needy families may get relief from the cooperative, which also arranges scholarships for promising students, organizes entertainment sometimes especially for old folks, and has established a rural childrens' nursery to assist busy mothers. Family planning and budgeting are taught by a dedicated female extension worker who has won the confidence of farmers' wives in the Tsao Tun Farmers' Association. Rural youth age 13 to 24, tempted by city life, are enlisted in Four-H Clubs that foster knowledge and leadership along with pride in tilling the land.

Carrying lychees to the auction.

Cooperatives for Rural Development

Engineering rapid rural progress to meet growing demands for food, social justice, and a better material life has become the most insistent task confronting the developing world. Repeatedly surveys have found and recommendations have emphasized that organization of farmers is essential to accomplishment of this goal, especially in Asia where population pressure and history fostered intensive farming of small fields. In many of these lands, abortive government programs have strewn the countryside with the wrecks of failed cooperatives, eroding the confidence of farmers in their capacity to organize productively. Each culture has particular handicaps to the creation of effective cooperatives. Often these relate to nepotism, perhaps favoring loans to relatives rather than to economically sound projects, and to mistrusting outsiders, whether from the same community or the national metropolis. Many farmers have joined a cooperative, paid their subscription for stock, begun joint marketing and purchasing, and then seen the cooperative fail, usually through mismanagement. It is immensely difficult to again enlist farmer confidence, especially among those with small holdings, in such an enterprise.

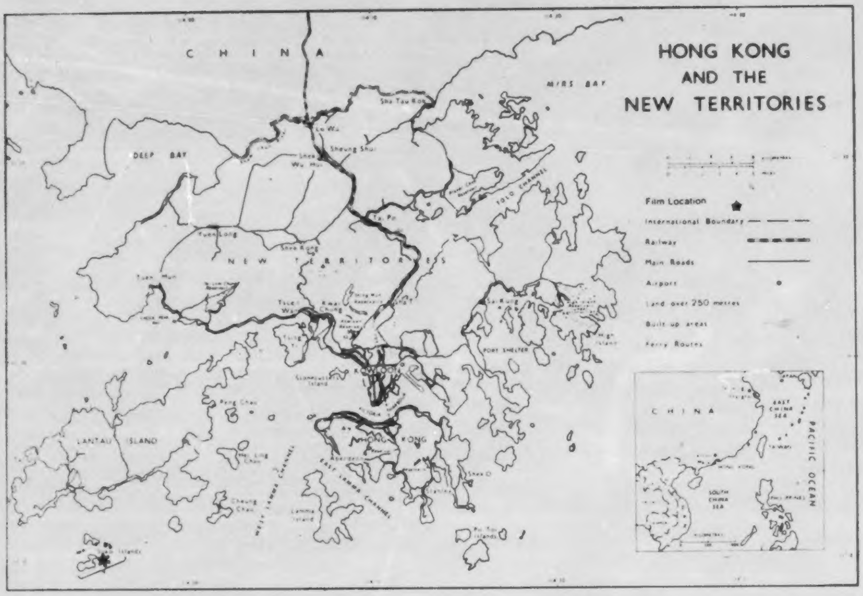
From the consumer cooperatives pioneered by the Rochdale Society of Great Britain in the 1840s to those of the German Mayor Raiffeisen in his small town and the farmers' cooperatives that remade rural Scandinavia after Bishop N.F.S. Grundtvig established his Danish Folk High Schools in the mid-nineteenth century, education for management and members has been vital to success of such efforts. It is the required first stage of a

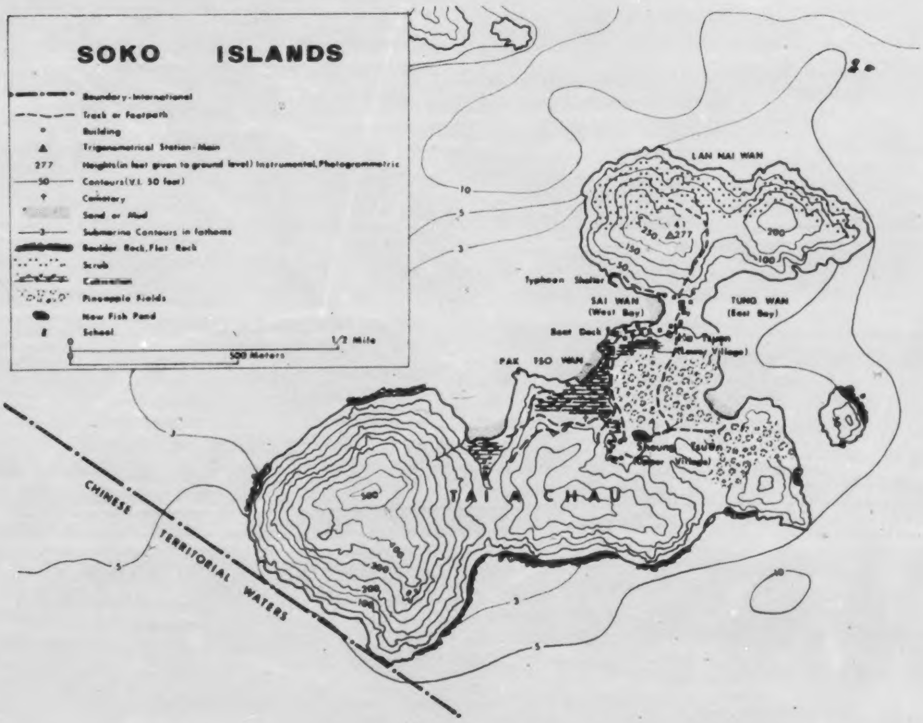
*See "A Chinese Farm Wife," another of the films in this series.

FILM LINK

dynamic process; functioning as a voting member and part-owner of a cooperative, the former peasant farmer is compelled to inform himself on a range of technical, financial, and community-political decisions far beyond the boundaries of his rice fields. The independent mindedness and knowledge of modern affairs in Taiwan and abroad displayed by farmers Hong Tung-hai and Hong Tsung-ming have become part of their life perspective through participation in decisions guiding the Tsao Tun Township Farmers' Association.

Modern technology is in the minds of those who use it more than it is in the machine, and this is especially true in agriculture. Ultimately the farmer, like an artist, must be adept in blending soil, sun, sweat, water, weather, and wit with an intimacy of attention to shifting circumstance that alone allows success. Agriculture at its roots never can be an assembly line with each stage merely an added mechanical move. Without the initiative and incentive of the individual farmer to invest his labor unstintingly and make sound decisions in time, there can be no bountiful yields. Yet, even with the best of effort, a farmer alone on only two and one-half acres in Taiwan would be trapped. Like most who till the ancient fields of Asia, he would be at the mercy of the moneylender, the rice miller, and other middlemen. And the opportunities to learn about and innovate with rapidly evolving new technology in agriculture and changing market prospects would be beyond his reach. Placing them within his grasp is the key achievement of rural cooperatives in Taiwan.


HONG KONG
AND THE
NEW TERRITORIES
CHINA
MIRS BAY
DEEP BAY
NEW TERRITORIES
LANTAU ISLAND
KONG
PORT SHELTER
Film Location
International Boundary
Railway
Main Roads
Airport
Land over 250 metres
Built up areas
Ferry Routes
CHINA
EAST CHINA SEA
PACIFIC OCEAN
SOUTH CHINA SEA


SOKO ISLANDS
Boundary-International
Track or Footpath
Building
Trigonometrical Station-Main
277
Heights(in feet given to ground level) Instrumental,Photogrammetric
50
Contours(V.I. 50 feet)
Cemetery
Sand or Mud
3
Submarine Contours in fathoms
Boulder Rock,Flat Rock
Scrub
Cultivation
Pineapple Fields
New Fish Pond
School
0
1/2 Mile
500 Meters
LAN NAI WAN
Typhoon Shelter
SAI WAN
(West Bay)
TUNG WAN
(East Bay)
Boat Dock
PAK TSO WAN
Sheung Tsuen
TAI A CHAU
CHINESE TERRITORIAL WATERS
277
250
200
150
100
10
5
3

CHINA COAST

1

Rural Society

ISLAND IN THE CHINA SEA

by C. FRED BLAKE

When the Yellow River people completed their Great Wall two thousand years ago, they became "Chinese" in the process. The Great Wall was supposed to bar the incursion of northern barbarian horsemen. But even after the wall was built these militant nomads periodically overran the more sedentary Chinese. Through the ages, the wall served less as a barrier than a symbol of the boundary between the broad alluvium of the Yellow River and the grassy steppe of Central Asia, between the intensive agrarian order and the nomadic herders, or as the Chinese perceived it, between "civilization" and "barbarism." In fact, Chinese possessed no single word for themselves; they used a variety of words that simply meant "civilized."

While Chinese technology, dikes, canals, and irrigation channels were unable to penetrate the arid plains of central Asia, they were able to develop the river valleys which defined the southern frontiers. For two thousand years refugees, exiles, soldiers, and other displaced peoples trickled south into one river valley after another, where they fought and mingled with the indigenous rice growers. Indigenous cultures and speech groups were increasingly unified under the imperial sway of the north, while northern social and cultural forms were adapted to diverse local terrain and accommodated many indigenous practices (see Appendix I). When this agrarian civilization finally reached the southeastern seashore it could not expand further. Still, its ever increasing population kept moving into the hills and onto boats and islands—such as the Sokos—to exploit the more marginal niches.

The South China seashore became another ecological and social boundary similar to that of the Great Wall. It fixed the boundary between those who settled the land and those who "floated" upon the sea and thus roamed beyond the pale of "civilization." The coast line was a social boundary in that it was a cultural and conceptual barrier. But it was also a zone of interaction, symbiosis, and sometimes succession between peasants who cultivated the cereals of civilization and boat people who supplemented the protein.

The Chinese Concept of Civilization

In linguistic terms Chinese is a system of written notations in which the written character is not intrinsically related to the sound system. That is, characters are not phonetic symbols; thus different local speech groups may understand written messages, but they cannot communicate orally. In pre-modern China, except for official bureaucratic functions which necessitated the use of Mandarin, the spoken language was unimportant. The imperial concept of civilization was catholic without regard for ethnic -

Film Dialogue

On this island and in its harbor live some 220 people. The fishing families, who reside aboard small junks, work the coastal waters with nets and lines. They use the harbor as a haven in bad weather and send their children ashore to school. Their main concern is the declining number of fish, due in part to pollution and to overfishing by larger, more mechanized junks.

The island farmers raise pigs and pineapples. Some also grow vegetables and keep a few cattle. Their problems revolve around getting the pigs to market in the community-owned launch, which must cross an open expanse of sea.

Narrator

variations in the spoken word. It tolerated variations of speech among the masses of common folk but relegated them all to local patois and often likened them to "the chatter of birds." But each Chinese speech group insists that its particular language—Cantonese, Mandarin, Hokkien, or Hakka—and customs are Chinese—or as Francis Hsu aptly phrased it for the group he studied, "more Chinese in some respects than the Chinese in other parts of China."* The reader may well ask, then, what is "Chinese"? In this essay I can only begin to sketch an answer to such a presumptuous question.

The concept of "civilization" classified persons to the manner of occupation in which a person earned his living rather than to the manner of his speech or the color of his skin. (Although the color of skin and the manner of speech might indicate the kind of work a person did, this was purely incidental.)

Those whose livelihoods were earned through official emolument as part of the literate bureaucracy were accorded highest status. Through their studies and official examinations they were selected for the purpose of cultivating the ethical practices which guaranteed civil order. The commoners who cultivated the earth and paid the taxes by which the scholar-officials were enabled to exert the ethical example were accorded secondary status. It was from this agricultural class that the bureaucracy was recruited. In third class were the artisans whose production of tools enabled the peasants to perform their agrarian task. At the bottom of the imperial heap were the merchants who were considered greedy, crude, and materialistic but were tolerated for their all-important role in distributing the necessities of life across the landscape. These classes were not fixed estates or castes, as they were in the Aryan world, but were fluid. A merchant, for example, might purchase land and provide his son with a literary education to enable him to enter the ranks of the ruling class.

Below the merchant class was the residuum. These were people whose manner of livelihood and life style did not support the concept of "civilization" except by negative example. These included prostitutes, butchers, bandits, soldiers, itinerant actors, beggars, barbarians—and boatpeople. In Chinese eyes, these were simply people devoid of "class."

Film Dialogue

We are farmers. Fishing life, on the other hand, is harder. Fishermen cook, sleep and eat in the same place. They even piss in the same place. Farmers are better off. When it's stormy, we have our house to go into. Fishermen have to put up with the strong winds at sea on their junks. Farmers have water to bathe in. When it's stormy, the fishermen may not be able to bathe for a week or even a month. In general our lives are safer and more secure. We have been farmers for a long time. For more than a hundred years our ancestors here have been farmers.

Ng Sing Yao, farmer

The harbor at Tai A Chau, an island on the South China coast.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Boatpeople

The South China coast is dotted by thousands of small offshore islands like Tai A Chau and laced with inlets and bays between the larger estuaries such as the Pearl River. These waters provide a shallow placid ground for about three or four million people living aboard boats and using nets and lines to gather marine life from the seas. Along the Fukien coast extending into eastern Kwangtung are the Hokkien-speaking boatpeople colloquially known as "Hoklo." The low-slung rakish design of their boats is distinct from those higher, jaunty junks of the Pearl River.

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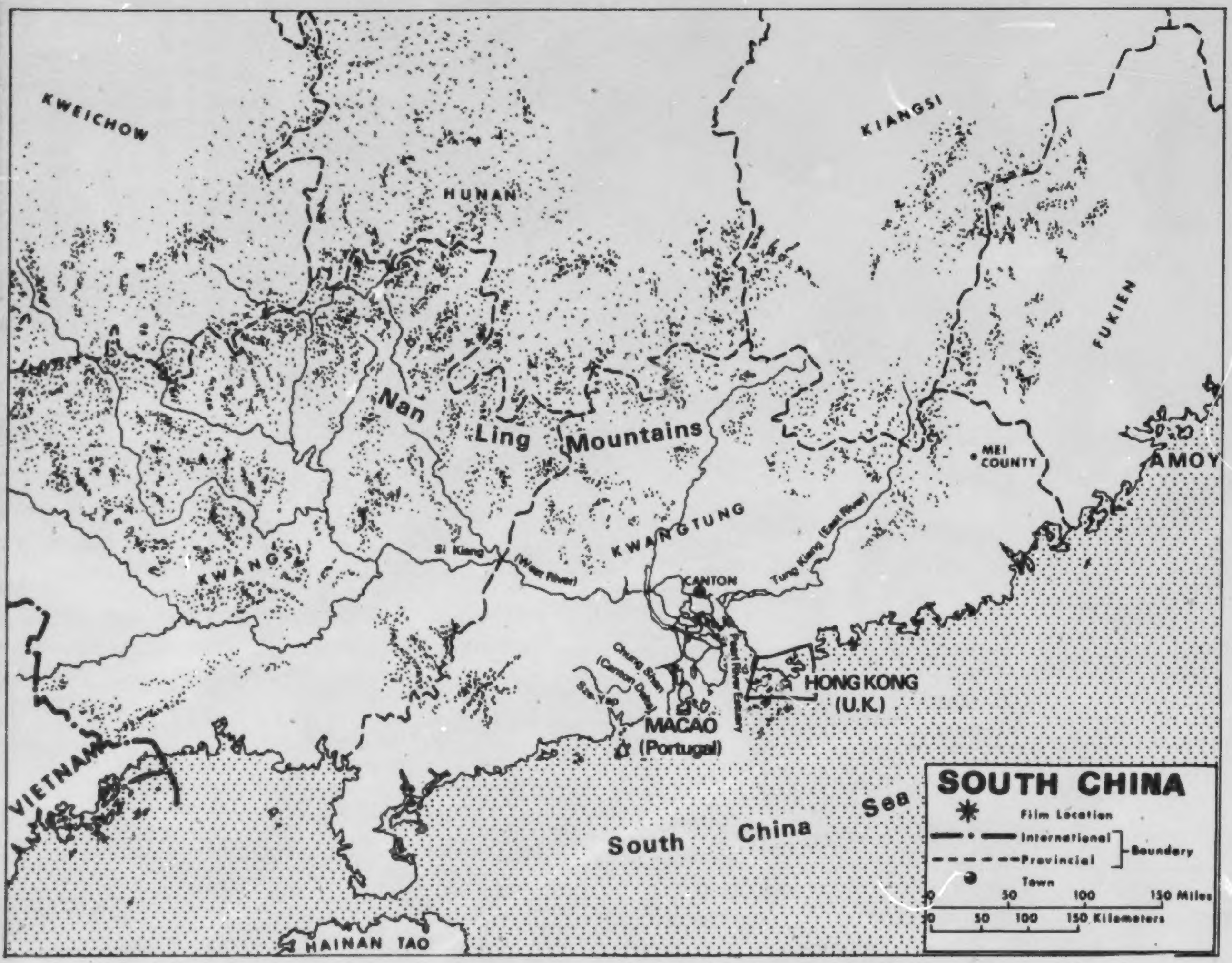
*Hsu, Francis L.K., *Under the Ancestor's Shadow*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1967, p. 19.


SOUTH CHINA
Film Location
International
Provincial
Boundary
Town
0 50 100 150 Miles
0 50 100 150 Kilometers
KWEICHOW
HUNAN
KIANGSI
FUKIEN
Nan Ling Mountains
MEI COUNTY
AMOY
KWANGTUNG
KWANGSI
Si Kiang (West River)
Tung Kiang (East River)
CANTON
Chung Shan (Canton) Delta
Sze Yap
Pearl River Estuary
HONG KONG (U.K.)
MACAO (Portugal)
VIETNAM
South China Sea
HAINAN TAO

A Soko Island fisherman.

In the Pearl area the boatpeople were long despised as "Tanka," literally "egg people." The name projected the popular image of the egg as reptilian. Out of the egg all manner of fanciful metaphors developed inferring that these people were indeed of a different breed. In the imagination of one ancient writer,

> The Egg people's spirit dwells in the image of the snake, which comes, it is said, from the seeds of the dragon. Drifting in floating dwellings or occupying the water's edge, these families commonly catch fish to eat; they do not till the soil and do not intermarry with the landpeople. It is therefore possible to distinguish in them an aquatic contenance in which the dragon is perceived and therefore by which name they may be called "Dragon Persons" or "Dragon Houses."*

Professor Barbara Ward, who has spent many years studying the boatpeople, reports that she once heard some "well-educated Cantonese" describe the Tanka as having a non-Chinese language and "the special biological distinction which gives them six toes on each foot."** Such images are metaphors of social distance. I doubt they are substantive claims to racial distinctions. In fact, no few physical attributes which seem to distinguish boatpeople from landpeople—darker complexion, rolling gait, small leg muscles and heavy shoulder development—are at least partially explained by their physical adaptation to living on boats.

There are generally two different explanations of the boatpeople's origins. One is that they are descendants of Chinese refugees (see Appendix I: Culture History and Ecology of the Lingnan Coast); the more popular view is that the boatpeople are sinicized Yueh aborigines. The view holds that when the first Emperor to unify China sent his troops to conquer Yueh 2,000 years ago, the Tan tribe retreated onto boats. Since that time the Tan people have adopted some Chinese customs while retaining many of their own.

The Boatpeople—Inside or Outside Chinese Culture?

Consider, for example, the concept of the family, the mainstay of Chinese culture. The Chinese family exists through the continuity of many generations and traditionally, the ultimate goal in this life was to be surrounded and cared for in later years by many sons and grandsons, and in the next life to be assured a place on the ancestral altar. A person who left no sons to honor him or her was most unfortunate, for without descendants one could not become an ancestor. The heirless person was a wandering or hungry ghost. Honoring one's ancestors was also the moral force by which the living person's behavior was monitored. Just as Christians try to follow the moral precepts of their collective Father (God), the Chinese tried to fulfill the ethical expectations of their own ancestors. Parents were obligated to raise and sustain their sons

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*Huang, Wei. *Pearl River Customs*. Hong Kong: The Shanghai Book Company, (In Chinese), 1957, p. 38.

**Ward, Barbara E. Varieties of the Conscious Model: The Fisherman of South China. *The Relevance of Models for Social Anthropology*. M. Banton (ed.). New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965, p. 119.

by passing on to them a material estate to be equally proportioned among all the sons. The inheritance was crucial to the sons' ability (and perhaps willingness) to care for the aged and later to honor their memory. Part of the soul of the deceased was thought to reside in a figure upon an altar in the family room. This was the center of daily rites.

Landpeople find exceedingly strange the boatpeople's custom of representing ancestors on the family altar in the form of little wooden icons. These are gaudy figurines, about ten centimeters high, which, for example, depict the deceased grandfather as a general riding a tiger. Some consider the use of these icons to be evidence for the boatpeople's original barbarism. The boatpeople also include deceased children among their stock of ancestral icons; moreover, they rarely include more remote generations than grandparents or those who are known from real life. Their ritual concept of the ancestor is thus restricted to the familiar spirits of the newly departed and is in comparison to other Chinese quite shallow.

Ironically, one of the classic Chinese stories of filial piety relates the origin of ancestor tablets in the Han Dynasty (first century) when Ting Lan remembered his dead parents but could not see them; so he carved their images in a pair of wooden statues. By this standard at least, the boatpeople's iconography is most originally Chinese!

Families living on the sea.

Film Dialogue

We don't know how to work on land; we weren't born to that work. Take for instance, growing rice. We don't know anything about sowing seeds. But land people have known about it since they were young. It's the same with fishing. If you are not born to a profession, you'll be unsuccessful at it. If we try to find work on land, say as construction workers, we would have a hard time. They expect you to carry 130 pounds. How could we do that? We aren't used to it, you see. Even if we could carry 130 pounds, during the slack periods they won't hire you. Anyway, what's the use of making $4.00 to $6.00 a day. If we fish, when we work more, we eat more. If we work less, we eat less. There are no fixed rules.

Wong Fo Hei, fisherman

Cantonese peasants generally set up a red wooden soul tablet inscribed merely with the name of the ancestor. The altar may contain tablets for ancestors as remote as five generations removed. Beyond this, tablets may be set up in a special hall built by an organization of all those who share the same remote ancestors. Delta Cantonese were settled on valuable land which they held in perpetuity; they could afford the proliferation of individual soul tablets through many generations. Indeed, the prosperous Cantonese documented their ancestral lineages and segmentations in the form of soul tablets and written genealogies not only to enhance their family prestige but also to manage claims to valuable family lands. In contrast, the boatpeople were in no position to make such claims on their ancestors. Claims to inheritance of a boat did not need lengthy documentation. The boats themselves hardly last more than a generation and a boat cannot be divided in halves or thirds for equal inheritance by the sons as a plot of land can be divided. Because of their poverty, boatpeople's sons were quicker to succumb to disease and famine before reaching maturity. The one statistic that I have found indicates that infant mortality in traditional times was significantly higher among boatpeople than either Cantonese or Hakka peasants in the same area. Thus traditional family economy and property accumulation among boatpeople was on a smaller scale than what many land families could and did achieve.

The Hakka* generally possess a single wooden tablet inscribed with their surname, which represents all ancestors who bear that surname. (Hakka may also write the names of immediate forebears on red paper and paste it on the wall; if not annually replaced it fades away with the memory.) The single surname tablet also facilitated the more ambulatory life style and tendency to organize on the broad basis of their Hakka identity rather than the narrower basis of lineage segmentation.

*See Appendix, page 20-21 for origin of Hakka.

In modern times, more and more urban Chinese follow the simpler tradition of keeping a single tablet for the collective ancestors. Many boatpeople who have become literate and prosperous in postwar Hong Kong also seem to be following this simpler tradition. Of course there are innumerable Chinese who keep no wooden representations of their ancestors at all. Hence, what makes a person Chinese is not what fetish a person chooses to represent the memory of his ancestors, but the fact that he honors that memory as the most meaningful thing in life.

While one's claim to be Chinese is enhanced by a written genealogy tracing 20 or 30 generations to a famous ancestor who held a post in one of the great dynasties, the mere possession of a Chinese surname is the *sine qua non* of Chinese identity. The Chinese surname is a crucial concept. Unlike the West, Japan, and most other cultures, the Chinese had a finite number of surnames

Land dwellers: eating rice, working in vegetable garden.

and they were not restricted to a single ruling class of people. Commoners, in fact, were often referred to as *lao pai hsing* or "old hundred names." All Chinese with "class," bureaucrats and commoners alike, were entitled with surnames, and each surname was a claim to renown. Whether or not a person had a written genealogy, his surname thus bore claim to a line of well-known officials and it is assumed that those who share a common surname share common descent.*

The boatpeople have standard Chinese surnames and in this nominal way at least attempt to validate their claim to "civilization." They also inform their ritual practices with the essentials of Chinese culture, most of the variations perhaps attributable to their domicile on the water. Most important, in the two crucial rituals in Chinese life which have to do with propagation and continuity of the ancestral line, marriage and death, the boatpeople follow the strictures of "civilized" practice: they do not marry people with the same surname (surname exogamy); they engage go-betweens to arrange the betrothal and wedding exchanges;** the bride goes to live in her husband's father's boat (viri-patrilocal residence).

Yet some of the ritual practices are distinct. On the morning of the bride's transfer from her father's to her father-in-law's boat, the boatwoman is often summarily dispatched in a covered punt during the wee small hours of the morning when the Yin (female) forces of the cosmos are dominant. Only after she arrives aboard her father-in-law's boat is she dressed in her bridal gown by her sisters-in-law. At dawn she returns to her father's boat decked in the red-sequined gown of a Chinese bride. By contrast, the peasant bride departs emaculately dressed around high noon

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*Possession of the same surname could even cut across ethnolinguistic divisions. However, if two people, say a Hakka and a Cantonese, were illiterate they might not recognize that their surname written (陳) was the same since the Cantonese would pronounce it "Chan" and the Hakka would say "Chin."

**Nowadays some Hong Kong boatpeople fix the bride price higher than do the landpeople. In one case a boat patriarch paid twice the price landpeople would pay for his son's bride (i.e., HK$10,000) saying, "We do this to give more face to our women." (The going rate in his area among landpeople was HK$5,000.)

Homes at sea and ashore.

when the Yang (male) forces of the cosmos are ascendant. The bride rides in an enclosed sedan chair, and does not return to her father's house for a visit until three days later. However different these ritual expressions appear to be, the underlying structure is, in both cases, "Chinese."

The second key ritual in Chinese life is the rite of death. One of the primary rules of Chinese culture is that the corpse is to be interred in a terrestrial grave, and the boatpeople follow this practice. It is also thought that the grave site, with respect to such fixed points as the family's household, is crucial to the fate of the living and their powers of procreation. This is called *feng shui* or "wind and water."

Landpeople may pay a great deal of money to hire a *feng shui* professor to site a family domicile. Boatpeople are generally too poor to engage such experts, as are many poor landpeople. But most crucially, the boatpeople do not maintain abodes fixed in space, and thus cannot enjoy the potential benefits of *feng shui*. Boatpeople say that *feng shui* is irrelevant to their lives. They say that traditionally when a family member died they would try to find a beautiful place on some remote island to inter the body. Often these graves were marked only with a stone and within a generation forgotten.

Because of their traditional nomadic movement from one bay to another, boats and families may not stay together in one place, and may be unable to visit the graves of their ancestors on the annual festivals such as Ch'ing Ming.* Thus in the Chinese scheme of things the boatpeople and other poor people only approximated civilization.

Other attempts to account for the historical origins of the boatpeople as a sociocultural group describe them as Chinese refugees from the onslaught of the Mongol invaders of the thirteenth century, or of the Manchu invaders of the seventeenth century. This view has merit insofar as most of the southern Chinese claim to be refugees from the North at one time or another.

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*Ch'ing Ming is the Spring Equinox in which the return of light and reawakening of nature is celebrated in many parts of the world. Christians celebrate it as the resurrection of their Savior; Chinese celebrate by going to the graves of their own ancestors. The graves are cleaned and offerings of chicken, pork, incense, candles, and paper money are laid out.

One flaw in this tidy theory, however, is that the boatpeople are not a single descent or linguistic group. In spite of the belief of many landpeople that boatpeople do not speak Chinese, the Canton boatpeople in fact do speak Cantonese just as those along the Fukien coast speak Fukienese (Hokkien). Moreover, with the exception of their technical jargon for fishing, boatpeople speak more or less the same local dialect of Cantonese that the peasants along whose shores they traditionally anchor speak. Since the boatpeople are geographically mobile, however, they often reside along shores other than where their native dialect is spoken. For this reason and because landpeople have a condescending attitude toward boatpeople's life style, the landpeople often conclude that what the boatpeople speak is not Chinese.

The Ecological Niche

It is interesting that many people, even Chinese in Hong Kong, entertain the misconception that the boatpeople are Hakka (see Appendix, page 20). Such notions are born from vague associations of boatpeople and Hakka with a despised residuum. The fact is that the Hakka are the only South China group to hail from the mountains of the interior. They had no native place of their own along the seashore. This does not mean that Hakka never inhabited the coast or never took to boats. Indeed they did when they sought refuge or new opportunities. The Hakka, as did other Chinese, merely formed part of the constant trickle of landpeople onto the islands and boats of the South China Sea. In the process, Hakka became part of the Cantonese-speaking aggregate since there were no large Hakka enclaves along the shore in which a Hakka boatperson might preserve his native vernacular.

This suggests that the ecological niche which the boatpeople occupy is closely associated with the terrestrial niche of the farmer and shopkeeper. The boatpeople do not constitute a group by virtue of their separate culture history either as "barbarians" or as "refugees." It is more convincing to view them as an aggregate of people who have adapted their Chinese culture to a marine habitat. Perhaps none has said it more succinctly than the compiler of the Chin Dynasty History (1,000 years ago) who observed that, "When the peasants are too many upon the land, the surfeit will seek to profit by the sea."* And no one was more dramatic than an uneducated but worldly-wise Hakka sojourner I knew. When I told him that some "educated Chinese" said that boatpeople have six toes, he declared, "Lies! Of course they don't have six toes, go look at one! They are people like you and me. Long ago they had no fields to till and were forced off the land. They did well fishing and developed their own customs which passed down from great grandfather to grandfather, father to son." Anthropologists who have recently studied boatpeople firsthand are also convinced of this view.

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*Han, Ch'ao. *Ch'ao-chou Customs.* Hong Kong: The Shanghai Book Company. (In Chinese), 1971, p. 2.

Social and Economic Discrimination

To understand who the boatpeople are, it is necessary to perceive the Chinese view of them as people without "class." Being devoid of "class" they were often barred from participating in the imperial examination system. In this system a common peasant might become an official in the imperial bureaucracy. Boatpeople were frequently barred from wearing shoes—a mark of civilized life style—where they were allowed ashore (needless to say they did not bind their women's feet). The boatpeople were otherwise discriminated against by sumptuary laws on utilization of food, clothes, shelter, and transportation. (Other categories of common people—peasants, artisans and traders—were also restricted, but to a much lesser extent.)

However, and this is most important, the Chinese generally did not consider the boatpeople to be subhuman, "castes," or "races" as Westerners imagined different peoples to be. The Chinese did not regard the boatpeoples' inferior life style (or the merchants' greed) to be a substantive attribute of the people themselves. Boatpeople merely violated the rules of civilized conduct out of an ignorance born of economic circumstance. It was within the Chinese realm of possibility that a boatperson might move onto the land, engage his sons in commerce or agriculture and have his grandsons and great grandsons study for the imperial examinations. The reason we may lack historical examples of this actually happening is because once a person was able to validate his status as a landperson or a scholar he was no longer saddled with the stigma of his former station. Besides the agrarian niche was extremely competitive, and landpeople—regardless of their civil ideals—erected barriers of prejudice to keep from enlarging the circle of competition.*

Symbiosis: Traditional Interdependence of Boatpeople and Landpeople

The question of whether the boatpeople preferred to live on the land cannot be answered with a "yes" or "no." There were a number of advantages to living on the water, the main one being ready access to food. Negating the burdens of agricultural civilization had other "benefits." Boatpeople were not harassed by agricultural tax collectors or rentiers. Their labor did not entail the backbreaking drudgery of rice paddy cultivation. It did not require the large-scale organization of rigid discipline in work, consumption, and emotional expression of earth-bound Chinese. Boatpeople were able to move away from "troubled waters": during civil upheaval after a troop of soldiers or bandits ravaged a village, the peasant must have envied the ease with which a boat family weighed anchor and moved elsewhere. In fact, starving or expropriated peasants or defeated bands often took to the sea as pirates.

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*The official Chinese view of boatpeople vis-à-vis local level views is illustrated in a 1729 edict [in Chinese] of the Yung Cheng Emperor "Granting Imperial Favor to Kwangtung's People of the Tan Registry":

Be it made known that among the declassed people of eastern Kwangtung are those registered as Tan. They are a type of Yao barbarian who live on boats and catch fish throughout the provincial waterways. They are so numerous that they cannot be counted. The Cantonese regard the Tan registry as a mean breed and do not allow them to live ashore. Nor do the Tan dare to contend with the common people. They patiently suffer their whole lives aboard cramped boats and never know the joy of a secure dwelling. Such a pity, for those of Tan registry are virtuous folk. There is no reason to expel them. Moreover, they pay taxes as fishermen and are one with the masses. How can it be that a local tradition of discrimination forces them to rove about scattering hither and thither? The Governor-General is to instruct his civil authorities everywhere to proclaim among those of Tan registry that whosoever among them lacks strength may remain in the boats; but those of sufficient strength should move ashore to build houses in villages near the water. Together with the masses they are to arrange themselves in public security units in order that they can be easily controlled. The local bullies are not allowed to fabricate pretexts with which to mistreat or expel them. And civil authorities are ordered to persuade those of Tan registry to reclaim barren land, to engage in agriculture and to thereby afford themselves of the opportunity to be like ordinary local folk and to regard the humanity of Our special decree. (*Hsin-an* County Gazateer, 1819: Introductory *Chuan*: 21).

Boatpeople paid for the benefits of independence with the coin of insecurity. There was no greater threat to the boat family's lives than the summer gales and typhoons. Although a tropical cyclone may destroy the peasant's crops and livestock, at least his family weathered the storm in their mud-brick house.

Farming and fishing obviously required vastly different skills. The shift from the sea to the land or vice versa was necessarily gradual. Boatpeople acquired fairly extensive knowledge of plant life while collecting firewood and herbs in the hills. They also knew something of animal husbandry. Many moored boats had potted plants, caged chickens, and dogs aboard (dog stew was a South China delicacy). Nevertheless, this was far from the kind of experience needed to manage a rice paddy. Although most peasant families raised pigs, they ate more fish than pork, the pigs being too valuable to eat.* Not all fish eaten by Lingnan peasants were caught by boatpeople. Many farmers in the Canton delta raised carp in freshwater fishponds and sold them in the market. There were also Hakka and Cantonese farmers who knew a great deal about the food resources of the seashore and the shallow bays and inlets. Some village families even specialized in fishing; they owned small boats but they did not live aboard. For them fishing was a livelihood, not a way of life! Their fishing was a far cry from the deep-sea fishing in which boatpeople engaged. The point, however, is that these landpeople were one step from becoming boatpeople themselves.

The primary basis for interdependence between boatpeople and landpeople was economic. Boatpeople were never self-sufficient. They were dependent on Chinese markets where they sold fish and other marine products and purchased rice, oil, sugar, and cloth, not to mention boats and fishing gear. Traditionally, before the Pacific War, the boatpeople dealt with certain fishmongers in the market town. The fishmongers invited the boatmen ashore, purchased their fish, drank tea with them, and loaned them money on their boats, interceded on their behalf with local officials and big men, and in general looked after their interests on shore. Most boatpeople became dependent on their patrons often to the point where the patron became the owner of the boat.

A boatman's survival depended on his maintaining a wide network of terrestrial contacts. He not only had a dependent relationship with a certain fishmonger in town but with others in the villages along the coast. There the boatman was welcome to fish in the neighborhood, seek refuge from storms, to moor his boat in the cove under the village, and to cut bamboo poles. From the village he got fresh water, herbs and firewood from the surrounding hills, and he might be allowed grave sites to bury his dead. In return the boatmen brought a string of fish or a sack of salt to the farmer's dinner table and at times transported the villager's produce and livestock to market. The farmer might then offer the boatman a bundle of salted cabbage or a sack of sweet potatoes.

Inoculating piglets.

Film Dialogue

In what ways do you use the island?

With fires we clean oil stains from the undersides of the junk. Sometimes we wash the sails. If the engine goes wrong, I don't know how to repair it. I take it to Cheung Chau to have it repaired. When we run out of firewood we go to the hills to get some. For water we go to the wells. There's one at the front of the hill and another at the back of the hill. If we need food we can buy vegetables. Farmers who run out of food can buy fish from the fishing junks. We sell several varieties.

Interview with Wong Fo Hei

As fishermen, we don't help with village work. If they need helping hands, they have to get them somewhere else. They know we are fishermen and that we don't have time to help them.

W.F.H.

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*The pigs turned scraps into the important fertilizer which made the farmers' land perpetually fertile and, therefore, made his agriculture characteristically Chinese. The pig was so essential to the Chinese farm economy that the character for "family" *chia* (家) depicts a roof (宀) over a pig (豕). The peasant could not affort to eat his pigs; he sold them in the market during the great festivals when pork was in demand by those who could afford a rich offering to the gods. Thus the daily source of protein for the peasants of Lingnan was fish.

Such offerings were not bartered but presented out of long standing sentiments.

These relationships between boatmen and landmen were often ritually cemented in fictive kinship or *ch'i* relationships. The boatman inevitably took the subordinate role of *ch'i*-younger brother or *ch'i*-son, and the farmer or fishmonger took the role of *ch'i*-elder brother or *ch'i*-father. Just as kinship, the *ch'i* relationship established a long term basis for interdependence. It also ramified to other members of the respective families and could be continued into descending generations. The relationships imposed obligations of mutual benefit not only when the need arose but also throughout the annual cycle of festivals in which both landpeople and boatpeople participate.*

Reciprocity did not extend to marriage, the epitome of social integration. There were traditional prohibitions on intermarriage between boatpeople and landpeople. Even today most landpeople express strong reluctance to marry a boatperson. No landperson normally consents much less arranges the marriage of his daughter to a boatman.** Landpeople still tend to regard life on the boats as too poor, insecure, and dangerous for their daughters, not to mention the loss of face for themselves. Furthermore, boatpeople may be reluctant to take a daughter-in-law from the land, for she will not be skilled in the kind of work necessary to sustain their margin of life.*** Similarly, a peasant does not normally consider marrying a bride from the boats. She is neither skilled nor disciplined to do the heavy field work. However, a boatwoman may be taken as a second wife in order to produce sons when the first wife proves barren. In the past, it was more common for a boatwoman to be taken to secure an important relationship.****

Postwar Industrialization and Symbiosis

The post-Pacific War era has been a period of profound change in south China. Technological innovations and industrialization have brought about the reorganization of primary producers, peasants and fishermen, which increased their interdependence. In 1949 the Chinese Communist Party won control of China from the Nationalist Army, which fled to Taiwan. The Communists proceeded to dispossess all Chinese landlords and the enclaves of foreign businesses and churches along the China coast. One of the amazing exceptions in this reorganization of the China coast was the continued existence of the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong. When the Red Army stopped short of invading Hong Kong in 1950, the colonial government decided to maintain its lucrative toehold on the China coast. The Hong Kong economy changed from its traditional role as entrepôt for the Pearl River area to a more self-contained industrialized city state.

In each place the reorganization of the peasants and fishermen has led to very different results. Hong Kong residents had to learn

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*The *ch'i* relationship was different from other forms of adoption or sale of children. Chinese culture turned on the parents' ability to beget sons: if a couple could not produce a son, it was necessary to adopt one to carry on the family name. The Confucian code specified that a son should be adopted from a close agnatic relative such as a brother. However, such an adoption caused a conflict of loyalties between the boy's adopted parents (i.e., his uncle) and his real parents. It was more realistic to adopt or purchase a boy from a stranger in order that the child remain ignorant of or at least not beholden to his original parents. Thus many heirless landpeople took from what seemed a reservoir of children living on the boats. The boatpeople's traditional poverty prevented them from raising all their children to maturity; and rather than watch them die from starvation or disease, the boatpeople were known to "sell" or "give" some of their children to the landpeople.

**In a few recent cases where a landwoman married a boatman, the two met as factory workers. Their marriage was not arranged by parents in traditional manner; the man moved to the shore, and the wife was not expected to go fishing.

***See "Three Island Women" film and film essay.

****For example, a Hakka villager who was *ch'i*-brother with several boatmen married a boatwoman from the same boat community. A Cantonese shopkeeper I knew in Hong Kong had taken his first wife from a Hakka farming village. When he reoriented his trade to the boatpeople, he took a second wife from one of the larger boat communities and she then helped in his shop selling fishing supplies. Both cases were taken from the post-1950 era when boatpeople began to exert their economic power in Hong Kong and the People's Republic of China.

how to depend on their own food resources, especially the fresh produce, livestock, and fish that was not as easily imported from Southeast Asia as rice. In the mid-1950s the Hong Kong government promoted primary producers' coöperatives among produce and pig farmers and fishermen. The government subsidized these enterprises and instituted other facilities to improve the livelihood and productive capacity of the food producers. Their goal was to gain economic independence from China.

FILM LINK

In the mid-1950s the People's Republic of China also began a revolutionary effort to become totally self-sufficient from the outside world through industrialization and collectivization. In the countryside, which held about 80 per cent of the Chinese population, agricultural life was transformed from traditional family work units into neighborhood work teams, village brigades, and regional communes. The Communists encouraged movements to make land collectively owned by the commune and to democratize the labor in order to increase production for the country and raise the living standard for the peasants.

One of the grievous problems of industrializing societies is the emigration of the primary food producers, especially the youth, who leave the drab rigors of farm life or fishing boats for the city lights and an 8- to 10-hour work day. China has scrupulously regulated this migration of labor in order not to deplete the countryside and to keep the cities from being jammed with "rootless" immigrants. Hong Kong has not placed restrictions on urbanization; in fact Hong Kong's laissez-faire economy thrives on a large unorganized pool of unskilled labor. As a result, many of the young "refugees" who "escape" to Hong Kong from Kwangtung communes are largely motivated by the promise of a factory job and other opportunities which are not open to them as peasants in China.

During the lean years of China's collectivization movement in the late '50s and early '60s, commercial farmers in the colony thrived. But in recent years the People's communes have begun to prosper, and they have been able to offer the Hong Kong markets fresh pork, ducks, produce, and fruits at prices with which most Hong Kong farmers cannot compete. Some Hong Kong farmers now cultivate flowers for the urban market; others have joined the unskilled labor force, for which the burgeoning Hong Kong economy has continued to provide jobs. A few of the most dedicated, efficient, and best located farmers continue to raise pigs and are able to profit during the traditional festivals such as Ch'ing Ming when pork is at a premium.

Film Dialogue

In general, pigs are sold at $40 or a little more per 130 pounds. That is considered a good price. But now, during the Ching Ming festival, the price goes up to $70 or even $80 per 130 pounds. Our chief problems are transport and prices. Transport is inconvenient. Prices are irregular. So it is difficult for the villagers to make a living.

Ng Sing Yao

FILM LINK

The boatpeople have presented administrators with other problems, since their marine habitat is necessarily part of the colony's sphere of control as well as the offshore waters of the People's Republic. Boatpeople are potential security risks for both of these diametrically opposed societies. But boatpeople also have a tradition of poverty and exploitation, and both Hong Kong and the People's Government—with different ideological rationalizations— have sought to free the boatpeople from the bondage of traditional patron-client relationships and to reorganize their lives and raise their living standards. By organizing boatpeople, both governments are also better able to maintain the security of their respective shorelines.

Film Dialogue

Realization of our future plans does not depend so much on the villagers as on the government. It's the government's duty to help us. We of course would like to live on here, after more than a century's residence here by our ancestors. But the problem is, can we make a living?

Ng Sing Yao

In both Hong Kong and China, boatpeople are officially designated as an occupational group (rather than a "race" or "ethnic group" as they have so often been described by Western observers). Both governments have made concerted efforts to settle them on the land and provide modern elementary education for their children.* In China, the fishermen are incorporated into fishing brigades within the larger agrarian communes along the coast. The commune owns the boats and finances technological improvements. The fishing brigades are also organized into units of the people's militia for the crucial task of guarding the coasts.

The boatpeople in Hong Kong were encouraged to form cooperative associations which managed loans for technical improvements in an attempt to make fishing a modern large-scale business operation.** A major innovation was the installation of diesel-powered engines. The cost of the engine, repairs, and fuel were offset by the tremendous increase in the speed and range of boats and therefore the size of hauls and fish sales. But this increase, along with industrial pollution, seems to be reducing the fish supply. Some boatpeople try to compensate for the loss by using smaller mesh nets that enable them to catch the fry. In the long run, however, these methods damage their ecological niche still further, a special disaster for the smaller boats which must confine their fishing to the placid waters of the colony.

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*See "Hoy Fok and the Island School," film and film essay.

**See "China Coast Fishing," film and film essay.

Changes in fish marketing have also contributed to the increased prosperity of many Hong Kong boatpeople. The government began to regulate the wholesaling of large hauls of fish in mid-1950s. Nowadays the fishing boats bring their hauls to market, around 4 or 5 A.M., where buyers assemble to offer competitive bids on various hauls. Although the fishermen and the fishmongers develop subtle means of reducing the competition and impersonality of the transactions, the overall effect is to secure a fair profit for the fishermen. In this way, the boatpeople have been freed from the paternalistic exploitation of the fishmonger.

In many markets around the colony the boatpeople exert their economic influence through cooperative organizations and their individual purchasing power. Shopkeepers increasingly orient their trade to the needs of the boatpeople in fishing equipment, engine parts, batteries and fuels, while mahjong parlors, teashops, and shops specializing in ritual paraphernalia are patronized by fishermen along the wharfs. More and more boatpeople have moved into town and begun to manage their fishing boats and crews from the shore. In many places boatpeople have become more prosperous than their neighbors on the land.*

Most boatpeople are changing their image from impoverished "outcastes" to well-to-do owners and businessmen. When ashore boatmen generally speak standard Cantonese, although they retain many of their traditional habits of dress and speech especially on their boats. If they can now afford to spend more on educating their children, they also spend their new prosperity on more elaborate traditional rites and festivities. Nowadays they are more reluctant to answer to the impolite term "Tanka," and instead have begun to insist on being called *Shui hsiang jen* ("waterborne persons") in recognition of their domicile and occupation.**

Unfortunately for many small boat fishermen, the government wholesale market only regulates hauls over one picul (about 133 pounds). This leaves a distinct class of boatpeople at the mercy of their traditional patrons. These include almost all the Hokkien boatpeople and not a few Cantonese. The small boat owners by and large do not belong to producers' cooperatives. They are among the poorest people in the colony. Many of them associate with Christian missions and welfare agencies including some anti-Communist relief organizations. Thus a number of them are nominally "Christian" or "anti-Communist."

The large prosperous boats go beyond the placid waters of the colony and fish in the open seas controlled by China. Although

Film Dialogue

You've said just now, sometimes there are no fish. Why is that?

No particular reason. It depends on the nature of the fish. If the nature of the fish is bad, there will be no fish. Like this year. There are no fish anywhere, even on the Chinese side.

Are there any other reasons? Are there any superstitions?

No, not really. Well, yes. If my wife goes to another junk shortly after giving birth, that junk will be unable to catch any fish.

Interview with Wong Fo Hei

The selling price is quite high. I'm very satisfied with it. San Doh fish sells at $6.00 per pound, while lesser San Doh are more than $4.00 a pound. That is the best priced fish. It's a good price.

W.F.H.

*The 1970 Hong Kong census shows that in one typical area where landpeople and boatpeople live the median land family's monthly income is HK$500, compared to the boat family's income of HK$700. Also 12 per cent of the land families were in the lowest income bracket (less than HK$200) compared to 11 per cent of the boat families, while less than 1 per cent of the land families were in the highest bracket (over HK$4,500) compared to 5 per cent of boat families. Another set of census datum shows that whereas only 69 percent of landpeople own the premises in which they lived, over 99 per cent of the boatpeople own their own boats.

**Older generation landpeople still refer to boatpeople as "Tanka," but they are usually careful to use *Shui hsiang jen* in the presence of boatpeople, especially ones with standing in the community or with money to spend in the shops.

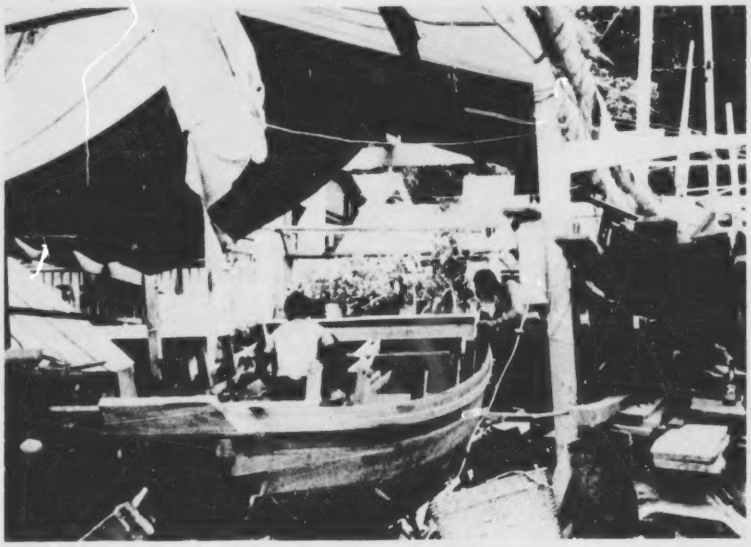
Above, boatbuilders in Aberdeen repair a fishing junk. Below, the hull of a smaller vessel is constructed.

they are based in Hong Kong, they are also under the jurisdiction of the People's Government and associate with certain coastal communes. Each New Year the boatpeople who traditionally went to pay their respects to their patrons now repair to their respective communes to renew their licenses, to attend political meetings, and to transact some of their business. They are expected to sell their cheaper fish to the commune and in turn they purchase staples such as rice, oil, sugar, and clothing at a cheap price. Their more exotic or expensive fish they retain for sale in the lucrative Hong Kong market. In many ways the boatpeople have the best of two worlds.

Thus with the help of the Hong Kong government the boatpeople have become part of the free enterprise system. Many boatmen are big businessmen, while the less competitive are still locked in the poverty of their traditional niche from which their children swell the ranks of unskilled workers. It is ironical that many of the poorer boatpeople, in order to make ends meet, are nominally "Christian" and "anti-Communist"; whereas, the more prosperous boatpeople are nominally "pro-Communist."

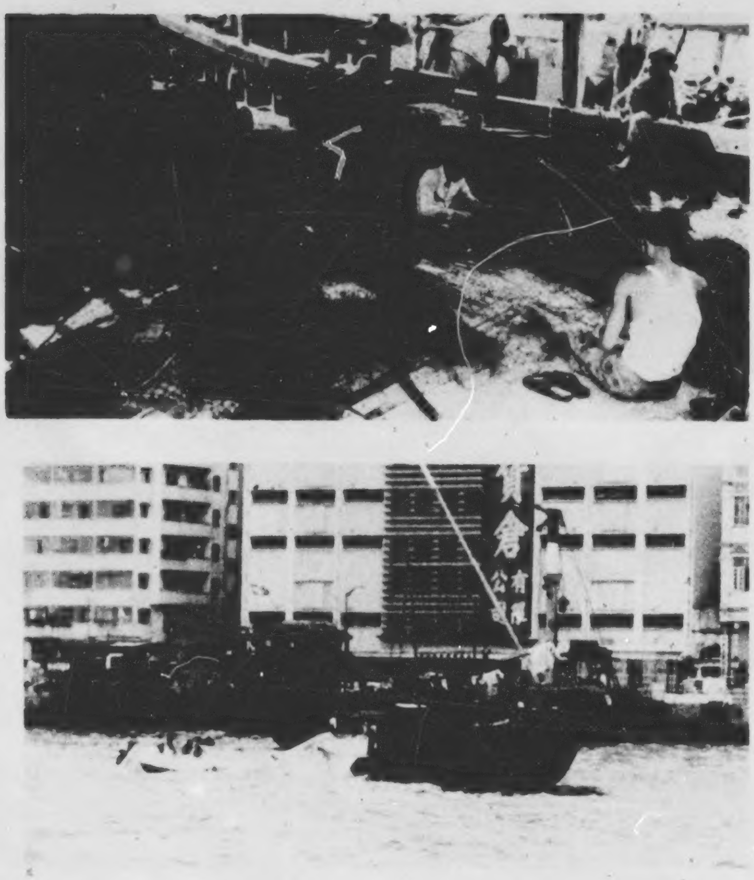
"Pro-Communist" refers to a substantive patriotic affiliation with the People's Republic of China rather than an abstract ideological commitment to socialism. Many large junks proudly carry a portrait of Communist Party Chairman Mao Tse-tung in their main cabin near the family altar. On the first of October, the National day of the People's Republic of China, they run up the five-star flag creating a sea of red in many Hong Kong harbors.*

Many of the Hong Kong coastal villagers have similar loyalties. Some hang the portrait of Chairman Mao near their ancestral



*The boatpeople's loyalty to China pays off in dividends of national security. The illegal passage between the China coast and Hong Kong involves foreign agents, especially Nationalist Party agents from Taiwan trying to infiltrate the China coast and various "refugees" trying to get out of China. Boatpeople are instrumental in the control of this traffic. In one instance, a group of fishermen commandeered a commune trawler, locked up their co-workers who were reluctant to go, and sailed for several days along the Kwangtung coast. When they entered Hong Kong waters they were being pursued by three Chinese militia boats, manned by fishermen, their wives and children! The refugees managed to slip onto the island where I was staying. While the militia boats circled the island, the refugees begged the boatpeople who dwelled on the island to allow them to stay until they could slip into Hong Kong. The boatpeople refused to allow them ashore and advised them to go back to China.

This in no way suggests that the boat-people are agents of the Communists, as it is sometimes alleged. Hong Kong is their home. There they retain much of their traditional sense of independence and extravagant customary practices, such as celebrations of marriages and the feast days of their patron deities, which are frowned upon as wasteful by the Communists. And the Hong Kong government subsidizes their organization in attempting to make fishing an individually prosperous enterprise for *some*, which it certainly is not for China's more democratic fishing brigades.



Net mending and fishing in Hong Kong harbor.

shrines and celebrate October first, but these coastal farmers and shopkeepers are not members of communes in China as many of their boat neighbors are. Few give any thought to the future status of the colony. While they happen to enjoy the freedom and general prosperity of Hong Kong, they deeply resent the anachronistic colonial rule, the rampant corruption and crime to which they must accommodate their daily lives. They admire the order and prestige which the Chinese Communist Party has achieved for Chinese in the world arena. Yet they express misgivings about the austerity of life north of the border.

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Since about 1970, the question of who actually controls Hong Kong, Great Britain or the People's Republic of China, is only half facetious. Great Britain earns a great deal from its colony. The size of Hong Kong's reserves in the United Kingdom, estimated at between 370 and 800 million pounds sterling, represents a substantial proportion of Britain's gold and foreign exchange reserves.

Downtown Hong Kong.

Yet the colony has become very much part of China. The colony cannot survive without the fresh food and water which comes daily from China. China supplies over 50 per cent of Hong Kong's food—fresh, canned, and preserved. China has made massive investments in the Hong Kong economy—banking and finance, publishing, state trading companies, and emporiums from which it earns foreign exchange. In 1971 *The Times* of London estimated that China earned US$720 million in trade and remittances from Hong Kong.

Perhaps two recent news items best symbolize the increasing symbiosis of these two societies. First, upon being admitted to the United Nations, the People's Republic of China requested that the colony of Hong Kong be removed from the official United Nations' status of a "colony." Second, Hong Kong wanted to purchase a nuclear reactor from the United States to be built and operated in China for the benefit of the city of Hong Kong.

Hong Kong is one of the tiniest societies and perhaps the purest laissez-faire economy in the world. Yet Hong Kong is, from the Chinese point of view, a part of the People's Republic of China, the largest society and the purest socialist economy in the world. And as long as the people of Hong Kong are only mildly dissatisfied with such a liminal arrangement, why shouldn't it remain that way for sometime to come?

Appendix I

Culture History and Ecology of the Lingnan Coast

One of the most salient cultural and geographical distinctions among Chinese has been between the North and the South. The culture and "official language" (Mandarin) of the North was centered on the Yellow River people. While their culture and language was influenced by the periodic onslaughts of the steppe nomads, North China* remained the focus of Chinese civilization from which emanated the imperial power. The great flood plains supported a dense population of wheat and millet farmers, and the area was referred to as the *Chung-yuan* or "Central Source." Today, 71 per cent or about 500 million people speak a dialect of Mandarin.

By the turn of the last millenium South China consisted of the tropical maritime provinces of Lingnan ("South of the Peaks"). Here the Tropic of Cancer happens to run along a range of mountains called the Nan-ling which rises to heights of one and two thousand meters. Although Lingnan lies within the tropics and its mountains afford some protection from the strong winter monsoon, the climate is seasonal. The winters are frost free in the lowlands, yet may be uncomfortably cold with temperatures averaging around 15 degrees centigrade during the Lunar New Year (February). In March the winter wind begins to retreat and the dry spell ends. The spring planting is accomplished in almost constant drizzle, and the rocky coastline is often shrouded in fog. By May East Asia becomes a low pressure area drawing in the rain-laden summer monsoon from the South Seas. June and July are miserably hot and muggy, broken occasionally by violent thunderstorms; much of the average annual rainfall (2,168 mm in Hong Kong) comes at this time. August and September are typhoon season which brings havoc and terror to fishermen and farmers along the coast. In September the winter monsoon begins to reassert itself from north of the Nan-ling. The weather turns extremely fine in time for the autumn harvest and the Moon Festival.

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*The political center usually remained in the "true" North, but the economic focus shifted from the Yellow River Plains to the Yangtse Valley after about the ninth century A.D.

Lingnan includes the southern tip of Fukien Province, which succeeded the aboriginal kingdom of Min, and the whole of Kwangtung and Kwangsi Provinces, which replaced the aboriginal kingdom of Yueh. Here rice dominates the banks of the meandering rivers which cut through narrow valleys and converge into broad estuaries opening along a coast honeycombed with inlets and islands.

The Cantonese

The largest river system in Lingnan flows out of the Himalayan foothills southeasterly through Kwangsi and Kwangtung. Here it forms a veinous and fertile delta which has slowly over the centuries encroached on the Pearl River Estuary. The agrarian potential of the West River and its delta attracted the first Chinese armies and settlers in the south during the first millenium.

The West River peasants were able to plant two rice crops a year on the same plot of land. Increasing numbers of people on the land coupled with Chinese social organizations and agricultural practices enabled the peasantry to shoulder ever greater fiscal burdens for the support of their civil bureaucracy. In the year 1012, a new strain of rice was introduced to China from Champa, a Malayo-Polynesian-speaking kingdom in central Vietnam. Champa rice shortened the growing season by 50 days, thus further insuring the West River peasants' double and in places triple crops. Champa rice also extended the multiple-cropping system into more northerly climes.

At the head of the Pearl River Estuary the Chinese erected an imperial outpost in order to tax the agricultural wealth of the region. This became the city of Canton. Canton was built not only to collect taxes but also to control the lucrative trade and tribute which flowed between the kingdoms of Southeast Asia and the imperial center in North China. Every year the winter monsoon carried the ships south from Canton laden with Chinese goods. In the summer the ships would return loaded with the tribute of Southeast Asia. Canton served as the window to the outside world, as it and its sister city, Hong Kong, continue to serve today.

The West River settlers retained their language with many of its original, ancient Chinese sounds and words. They also mixed their culture and language with the local Yueh populations, which included a variety of non-Chinese language groups. Over several centuries, the dominant language of the West River diverged gradually from the more progressive Mandarin of the North. West River speech became known as "Kwangtung speech" or Cantonese.

But even Cantonese was not homogeneous. Each district around the West River developed its own dialect, some of them mutually unintelligible.* The so-called standard Cantonese today is spoken in the urban centers, namely Canton and

*For instance, the people who farm the delta speak *Chung-shan* district dialect, while their neighbors to the west speak *Sze-yap* dialect. These two dialects of Cantonese are almost different languages, and each of the two peoples virtually deny the status of "Chinese" (i.e., "civilized") to the other. In the history of migration to America, these social distinctions were maintained as the *Chung-shan* people settled in Hawaii while the *Sze-yap* people settled in California.

Hong Kong, which lies at the mouth of the Pearl River Estuary. About 35 million people (or 5 per cent of the population of China) speak a Cantonese dialect.

The Hakka

The Pearl River has another tributary which heads in the mountains of northeastern Kwangtung and enters from the east just south of Canton. Here in Mei County another refugee group is now thought to have settled about a thousand years ago. The limited fertile lowlands and trade centers along the China coast had already been populated by the Cantonese to the west and the Fukienese (or Hokkien), another distinct language group, to the east. The newcomers were therefore relegated to the mountains of Mei County among more primitive bands of horticulturalists and hunters. The newcomers assimilated some of these aborigines and pushed those who resisted deeper into the mountains.

The language of the newcomers was more like the northern tongue spoken at the time and therefore quite incomprehensible to the local Cantonese and Hokkien speakers, who dubbed the immigrants "Hakka," which literally means "guest people." However benign such a name seems to us in English, Hakka carried a stigma in Chinese which inferred that these people were outsiders and thus uncivilized. (The name was nearly comparable to our degrading usage of "hillbilly" or "nigger.")

The Hakka conserved their speech and mixed it somewhat with aboriginal usages as the Cantonese had done earlier with their language. Mandarin too continued to change, partly under the influence of the "northern barbarians." During the following centuries these divergencies developed into different languages altogether: Mandarin, Cantonese, Hokkien, and Hakka, the relationships among them being comparable to those among Italian, French, and Spanish with their common roots in Latin.

As hillfolk, most Hakka were not fully participant in the agrarian economy of lowland China. Their poverty forced the women to labor on the thin soils of narrow mountain terraces. Wherever possible they cultivated rice, but many relied more on dry field crops including a variety of indigenous tubers and, after the arrival of the Portuguese in 1500, the American sweet potato. The potato did for the hillfolk what Champa rice had done for the lowlanders 500 years before: it increased the carrying load of the land for several centuries.

One of the results of mobilizing women as field labor was that the Hakka could not afford to adopt the new Chinese custom of female footbinding, which had become a popular practice during the invasion of the Turkish and Mongolian hordes beginning in the twelfth century. The Chinese sought to distinguish their "civilized" women from the "northern barbarians" who, the Chinese presumed, needed the labor of their women to maintain their meager economies when they were not plundering south of the wall. Footbinding crippled the foot and physically bound the woman to the domestic sphere where she acted as a symbol of conspicuous consumption. In time, the Hakka who needed the labor of their women made a virtue of their women's natural-sized feet. However, their lack of a footbinding tradition was further proof to other Chinese that the Hakka had no "class" and were merely mountain barbarians.

Toward the nineteenth century the people of Mei County began experiencing population pressure. While the women continued to cultivate the hills, Hakka men drifted south and west along the East River in search of land. Here and there they gained footholds as tenants and as squatters in the midst of the Cantonese: squabbles over land tenure and water rights inevitably erupted. By the middle of the nineteenth century there were enough Hakka enclaves and imperial control was sufficiently weak in the south that squabbles flared into disastrous conflagrations between Hakka and Cantonese all around the lower East River and the West River extending into Kwangsi.

The most famous uprising, perhaps the biggest and bloodiest in world history, was begun by a group of Hakka tenants who defeated their Cantonese landlords. When the imperial troops came to the aid of the Cantonese, Hakka men and women defeated them too. Inspired by Hung Hsiu-ch'uan, a charismatic religious leader, the Hakka then marched north and east through central China amassing hundreds of thousands of poor peasants in what became the Taiping Rebellion. It is estimated that 20 million persons lost their lives in the course of this conflict. By the time the revolt was finally crushed 15 years later in 1865, the name Hakka bore additional stigma as "bandits." The Hakka retreated to the marginal lands, hills, seashores and islands where they might once again eke out a living. Today, Hakka is spoken by about 28 million Chinese, some 4 per cent of the population.

The British and Hong Kong

Another ingredient in the machinations of nineteenth century South China were the Europeans, especially the British. The Chinese called them "big-nosed fellows," "red-haired devils," or just "foreign devils." Unlike traditional traders from Southeast Asia who had presented their wares in a manner acceptable to the Chinese, the truculent Europeans demanded trade on their own terms, what in Chinese eyes was the crude practice of "free trade." The British established their free trade by force of arms in various small coastal fishing villages. Protected by British gunboats and administered by British (commercial) law, these villages soon mushroomed into thriving port cities. Such was the origin of Hong Kong in 1842.

Foreign enclaves such as Hong Kong also offered Chinese access to labor and later commercial opportunities in European colonies. Hakka males were among the first of the many Chinese who took advantage of the overseas opportunities, for sojourning was already a well-established tradition which complemented the tradition of their natural-footed wives working the ancestral lands. Unfettered by Confucian mannerisms, the Hakka tradition of austerity and aggressive spirit facilitated their success in the business of free trade. By the end of the century a Hakka merchant class had arisen. At the same time they became intensely conscious of their ethnic identity and the unsavory stigma they carried as "China's gypsies."

As part of a progressive merchant class which had little status in the imperial Confucian order, Hakka were among the early movers of China's national or republican revolution. In the ferment of this struggle their leaders, along with a few Europeans, mostly missionaries enamored with Hakka habits of frugality and poverty, researched their roots and wrote articles demonstrating that the Hakka language was actually closer to Mandarin than other southern Chinese languages.

Hakka genealogies were assembled to prove that they were in fact descended from the scholar-officials of the Yellow River, that is, they were "true Chinese" and not southern aborigines. Where Hakka had previously shirked the name, they began to embrace it, arguing that if they were outside the local culture of the south, it was because they were from the civilized centers of the north. Some went so far as to reason that the Cantonese who were so proud of their local roots were nothing more than descendants of the Yueh "barbarians."

CHINA COAST

2

Education

HOY FOK AND THE ISLAND SCHOOL

by LOREN FESSLER

Ng Hoy Fok is 14 years old. He has spent most of his life on his family's small fishing junk. Since he learned to walk he has been kept busy fishing, maintaining nets, marketing the catch, and caring for younger children. At the age of 12 he started spending several hours of most weekdays in the small schoolhouse in the Lower Village on Tai A Chau,* the island his family uses as a base for its fishing operations. He is a mediocre student, and it is unlikely that Hoy Fok or his parents, who are illiterate, will ever read a book or a newspaper. But this fishing family is part of the education conundrum in Hong Kong.

"College Student Hangs Herself," reads the headline. "Suicide Note Says Studies Load Unbearable," continues the article in *Wen Wei Po*, one of Hong Kong's leading communist dailies, reporting how a girl had killed herself because of poor grades and parental pressure. Soon after the same paper featured another article on education, charging that on Lantao Island, the largest in the Colony with more than 30,000 people including some 7,000 high school students, there is no secondary school nor plans to build one. Those who have qualified for secondary school have to rise at 5:00 A.M. to catch the first Lantao-Hong Kong ferry at 6:15 and then spend roughly an hour each way commuting daily to school.

An over-age primary school student; a frustrated college student resorting to suicide; demands for more schools. These three examples suggest the scope of the educational dilemma facing a variety of people—harassed students, determined parents, and colonial administrators—who are concerned with the availability, appropriateness, quality, and cost of education. To understand their problems better, it is useful to have some idea of the history of education in China.

Education in China before 1940

Among the various stereotypes foreigners have about the Chinese is that they are all studious people who value education highly. It is one of the more complimentary stereotypes—and one of the more accurate. Education was the surest ladder to respectable status and material benefits in a society where century after century there was little change in the way ordinary people made a living—or in the values they held—and there was little incentive for "new" knowledge. A tiny, highly literate elite, which rose to power through a series of civil service-type examinations based on formalistic and didactic literature, administered the Chinese empire. For a young man to become a government official assured the well-being not only of his parents but also of many relatives in the extended family system, providing useful business connections, minimizing taxes, and getting jobs where examinations were not required.

Film Dialogue

Hoy Fok: *How can I go to work on Cheung Chau Island without knowing anything? What can I do? . . .*

Interviewer: *How much have you learned in school?*

Hoy Fok: *About half of what I was taught.*

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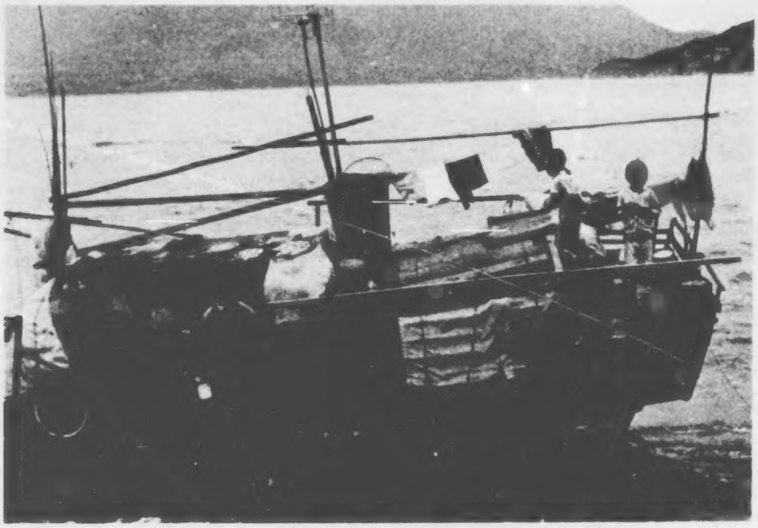
*The word "chau" means "island."



Hoy Fok's family at home.

In much of China until the 1940s literacy was limited mostly to the male offspring of property-owning families. There were exceptions even in "traditional" China. A few women were taught to read and write and occasionally a bright lad from a poor family would get his education paid for by fellow villagers. As the forces of internal discontent combined with outside imperialism and modernization to turn "traditional" China into "revolutionary" China, their numbers grew, but the mass remained fundamentally unaffected.

In the century between the Opium War (1839-1842), when Imperial China lost its first piece of territory to a foreign power,* and China's emergence as a nominal world power during World War II, the content and manner of education changed drastically in the cities and towns, although it remained the key vehicle for upward socioeconomic mobility. Certificates and diplomas from secondary schools and colleges carried virtual guarantees of jobs in government or private enterprise. Such jobs not only insured against the necessity to perform physical labor, but might also lead to real economic and political power. In rural areas, where roughly 80 per cent of the population still live, schools of any kind were rare before the middle of this century, and literate people few.**

The early years of the twentieth century saw both the abolition of the examination system and the final collapse of the Ching dynasty. A debate waged over what kind of education—Western or classical Chinese—was best for China as a country or for Chinese as individuals. No one questioned the idea that education itself was a good thing. Moreover, as the impact of modernization spread, so did the idea that as many people as possible should receive an education. Schools of every type increased in number

*Hong Kong was ceded to Britain in 1843.

**The single exception was Taiwan where, by 1938, after four decades of Japanese occupation, 59 percent of school-age children were in schools.

and enrollment. This trend was influenced partly by a far-flung, mainly urban, nationalistic trend aimed at making China strong and partly by a growing awareness that in the harsh, highly competitive society that China had become, the more education a person had the better were the chances for prosperity.

Education in Hong Kong before 1940

Prior to World War II, neither British colonial administrators nor the Chinese merchant class making up the "influential" elements of Hong Kong society considered government's role in education to be of much importance. Wealthy Chinese sent their sons to be educated in Canton or other provincial centers. British youngsters were placed in a few specially run Hong Kong schools or boarded in England where they would be assured of getting "proper" training. Local education was left largely to missionary societies working among the urban poor. Government's concern for the education of Chinese stemmed mainly from the need for bilingual personnel capable of serving as interpreters and lower-level administrators.

This rather specialized concern for education in the colony became linked with concern for Hong Kong's health when a group of private citizens founded the Hong Kong College of Medicine in 1887.* By coincidence the fall of the ruling dynasty in China and the British decision to make Hong Kong Medical College a part of the new Hong Kong University both took place in 1911. When almost every aspect of "traditional" China was breaking down and strong forces seeking change were at work, the goal of the University was to produce stable, Western-educated Chinese who would help further British interests in Asia.

There remains today a very conservative attitude toward education in Hong Kong, although its situation as a colony has changed dramatically. The Pacific War set in motion or speeded up changes in the old imperial-colonial, Caucasian-Asian, "advanced-backward" relationships which are still going on, and the Royal Crown Colony of Hong Kong was, and continues to be, deeply affected by them.

Education in Modern Hong Kong

In the 1950s it became apparent that Hong Kong was neither going to be absorbed by the People's Republic of China nor economically strangled owing to American hostility toward China and to the war in Korea. Hong Kong's Colonial government and Chinese entrepreneurs—led by hard-driving capitalists from the textile world of Shanghai—then set about changing Hong Kong's economic base. From a place primarily dependent on the transshipment of goods to and from China, Hong Kong rapidly evolved into a center for textile and light industrial manufacture.

*Among that institution's earliest graduates was a zealous young man named Sun Yat Sun. Dr. Sun eventually rose to international fame, not as a doctor but through his political activities contributing to the overthrow of the tottering China dynasty in 1911 and the institutionalization of Chinese nationalism in the 1920s.

Hong Kong's "industrial revolution" shared a number of similarities with its European predecessor, and the reliance on laissez-faire capitalism was particularly strong: quick turnover of capital, high risk for high profits, long hours for low wages, low taxes, and minimum concern for bothersome problems like industrial safety, housing, education, or other social considerations. Capitalists invested in factory buildings and luxury flats yielding quick profits, and workers lived where they could. They erected packing-box shanties, tens and thousands of them, covering hillsides, clogging alleys, sprawling on rooftops. And going up in smoke. One fire, on Christmas Day, 1953, left 53,000 people homeless. Big fires were bad for social order—and bad for business. So, most reluctantly, the government became involved in public housing. Two decades later roughly half the people in Hong Kong were living in accommodations financed wholly or partially by government.

While government investment in public housing was clearly necessary, the need for government financing of education was much less clear. Children without schools do not pose the same clear and present danger as adults with no place to live. And government approached education even more cautiously than it did housing. For tens of thousands of urban Hong Kong families securing a place in one of the Colony's schools was little more than a dream. For island boys like Ng Hoy Fok, attending school was, until recently, too remote even for speculation.

Gradually the situation changed. In 1951-52 government's expenditure for education came to around 3.5 million U.S. dollars, or roughly 8 per cent of the Colony's total budget. From the late 1950s through the 1960s the percentage budgeted for education increased a bit—running around 12 to 14 per cent of the total. However, each year the total budget, reflecting the Colony's increasing prosperity, climbed dramatically. From about $12 million in 1958-59 the education budget increased to around $48 million in 1968-69.

Children playing "clap cards" at the Tai A Chau school yard.

But as money for schools increased, so did the demand for more and better education. A senior lecturer in psychology at the University of Hong Kong illustrated the problem in 1963: "Schools are insufficient in Hong Kong...." he wrote, "secondary schools are few, at least good ones; only between 5 to 10 per cent of the children in primary schools get places in government or government-aided schools and the possibility of getting through to University are minimal in most other schools."

To get into "good" primary schools, many children were set to studying at home and in special kindergartens between the ages of three and five. From these tender years began a ladder of ever more difficult exams on the climb to formal education and prestige jobs in the bureaucracy and private business. Many failed, and a few—like the girl in the headline—killed themselves in despair. Others, the vast majority, slid into the labor market, either seeking

Hoy Fok, his brother and sister.

jobs in the outside world of business, industry, and petty bureaucracy, or becoming part of the work force in a family enterprise. There they would combine whatever they had gained from their formal education with what they knew or could learn in the family venture.

Such was the case with the fisherman's son, Ng Hoy Fok. For him, education began long before he entered the primary school on Tai A Chau. For him and all the children of boat people—once considered unworthy of formal education—the idea of learning to earn began approximately simultaneously with the ability to comprehend the spoken word.

On a fishing boat the philosophy of labor might be expressed as "from each according to his ability and to each as the junk captain (usually the father of the core family) sees fit." Children able to walk and climb but still too small to haul in or repair nets are expected to look after younger brothers and sisters and to help keep the junk neat and clean. As their sea legs develop and their arms gain strength, children learn to scull their junk's auxiliary sampan and to steer the fishing junk itself while parents and elder siblings place or retrieve nets. Children's first counting and sorting lessons come early as they watch gill nets being retrieved. Ten good-sized fish in one net haul means a good meal for sure, and maybe some money for shore-bought biscuits. One or two or no fish may mean only rice and salt fish and harsh words or a box on the ears from Mother or Father.

Until three decades ago the children of fishing and farming folk learned very much in the same way as their ancestors three and more centuries before them learned. Then came technical change.

First there was radio—originally used on junks to warn of storms. The numbers of radios and varieties of programs increased

Film Dialogue

Interviewer: *Who taught you to fish?*

Hoy Fok: *I learned to catch and handle fish in various ways. I've learned about making and repairing fishing nets: there are several steps. Fishing requires a lot of work.*

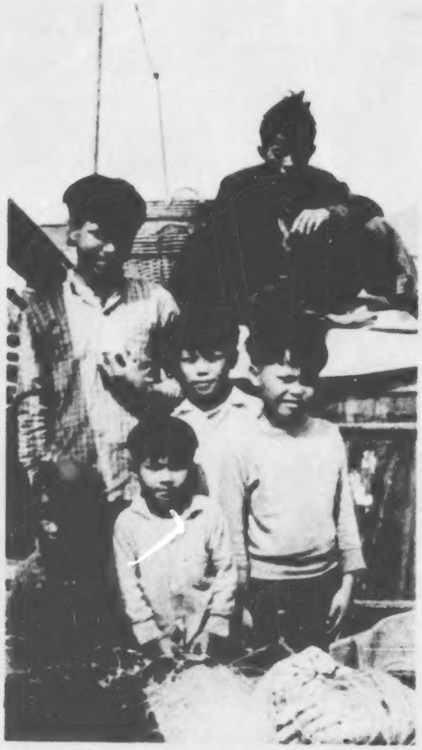
Interviewer: *What do your parents do?*

Hoy Fok: *Catch fish.*

Film Dialogue

Teacher: *The government's primary education policy is not solely designed to meet the needs of fishermen. It is the same all over without any distinctions. They do not have special fishermen's schools with special curriculums. This particular school is not called a fisherman's school; it is just an ordinary government primary school. Provided they receive one or two years' education they will learn simple calculating which will help them in bargaining and selling fish. They'll also learn how to use Chinese characters to make records. It will be a good help to their memories as well. Hence this type of education, as a matter of fact, is of benefit to fishermen.*

Children of an island fisherman.



rapidly after World War II. Fishing and farming people soon began learning about market trends, new equipment, sanitation and a whole variety of topics previously available in limited and often garbled form through gossip sessions and visits to markets. And the markets—with a variety of organizations created or controlled by government during wartime to promote cooperation among producers, vendors and consumers—began contributing greatly to changes in the fields of technology and education.

In Hong Kong the Fish Marketing Organization as early as 1946 created a primary school for the children of fishing families. And although the school to which Ng Hoy Fok goes has no connection with the FMO schools, the availability of those schools stimulated the interests of both fishermen and farmers in remote areas like Tai A Chau. The school Ng Hoy Fok and his companions attend owes its existence in large part to a tough, determined leftist of uncertain background and to a policy of enlightened self-interest on the part of the Hong Kong government.

In the late 1950s Ng Kam Chuen, then Village Representative and an openly avowed admirer of Chairman Mao Tse-tung, started pressing the Colonial government to build a school on Tai A Chau. He also had to pressure the fishing families who consider Tai A Chau their home harbor. For, unless Ng Kam Chuen could provide reasonable evidence that at least 40 students were going to study on Tai A Chau, no funds either for building the school or paying for a teacher and teaching materials would be made available. Many of the parents on the fishing junks were reluctant to commit themselves. It is fairly easy to schedule the children's farm work to fit with normal school hours: pigs are fed early in the morning, and crop weeding can wait until late afternoon or even the weekend. But when garoupa are thick in a certain channel or the moon is right and squid are mating, no fishing boat can wait. Delivering children to school and picking them up takes extra time and extra fuel. It can mean going out short-handed during the few hours when some valuable species of fish are abundant. And where will a boy stay ashore if his junk has to run for the nearest shelter when a sudden storm comes up?

Although land-born and dedicated to farming, Ng Kam Chuen spent years on the water both as a fisherman and as a deck hand on steamers. A skilled speaker and a pragmatic example of the benefits to be derived from learning to read and write, Ng Kam Chuen eventually persuaded several fishermen to "sign up." And the British, anxious to control if not eliminate the communist tendencies of men like Ng Kam Chuen, consented to supply a school. It isn't much of a school. Enrollment by the '70s was down to about 25, and getting good teachers was difficult. But the building, complete with sleeping quarters for children whose junks are away, is there. The curriculum and teaching materials are British supplied and approved—hopefully a step in the "right direction."

Hoy Fok's parents and grandfather watch television while mending nets.

So Ng Hoy Fok, as well as the sons and daughters of other fishermen and farmers, learn to read, write, do elementary math and operate an abacus. In the process they see pictures of and read about foreigners with big noses, strange color skin and hair. They also learn about Chinese who live in multistory apartments, drive shiny cars and ride in airplanes. From books and looks and personal remarks by their land-born schoolmates and their adult relations, the students of fishing families learn how different—and to landfolk inferior—their lives are from life on the land.

The information and ideas students like Ng Hoy Fok are exposed to in the island school are supplemented by yet another product of technology which is changing people's lives—television.

There are at least two TV sets in the Soko Islands. One of them is on Ng Hoy Fok's boat, the other is in the house of Village Representative Ng Sing Yao. Why Ng Hoy Fok's junk, which is one of the smallest and poorest of the dozen or so Tai A Chau vessels, has television is unclear. The Ng family is proud of its set, which can be run from either battery or the junk's diesel engine, and when the junk is moored people from other boats come aboard to watch. Likewise on land, after supper when Ng Sing Yao has turned on the British Army donated generator which supplies the island's electricity, his house becomes the community's entertainment and education center.

Hoy Fok, one of the eldest and slowest students in his school, is especially vulnerable to insults which have a vaguely "ethnic" ring. Traditionally Chinese chroniclers, exclusively from the literate elite, considered boat people non-Chinese or "barbarian." In some areas like Canton boat people were forbidden, on pain of death, from living or working ashore. While economic and political developments have ended any such restrictions, the old prejudices continue to pulsate.

Film Dialogue

Teacher: *Ng Hoy Fok came here to study last year and has been here nearly two terms. But because his parents are illiterate, he seldom gets help with his homework. He was quite old when he began his schooling. He is not a mischievous boy, but is very curious about things. This is evident in his study habits. Many times in class his attention wanders; he likes to play around and to tease his classmates. He is quite weak in his homework.*

If he stays here for one or two years that won't be much help to him. If he could finish primary school it would be better and of more benefit to him in future. Because he was quite old when he began schooling, he has not learned to memorize very well. His overall abilities are below average. Therefore his studies for one or two years won't be that much help to him. But learning to calculate would help him, especially in selling fish.

Interviewer: *As village leader, what's the future for a boy like Ng Hoy Fok?*

Chairman: *Ng Hoy Fok, being a fisherman, has his own unique way of thinking. Fishermen's thinking is somewhat backward. They lack culture and have few creative interests. They are often unwilling to send their children to school.*

Film Dialogue

Mr. Ng: *He's been studying for three semesters.*

Interviewer: *Do you know how he's doing in school?*

Mother: *How can we know? He studies over there. How can we know what he's learning in school? It's his affair. We don't know anything about it.*

Interviewer: *When you fish, does he help?*

Mr. Ng: *Yes, he's very good.*

Mother: *He helps in loading and unloading the boat and handles the oar.*

Interviewer: *Is school doing him any good?*

Mr. Ng: *He knows a little, but he doesn't know very much yet. He's good enough to read names and bills and to sell fish.*

Ng Sing Yao.

For Hoy Fok, the bit of reading, writing and figuring he learns in a couple of years at school will satisfy his family's basic expectations. Neither he nor his parents, although they complain that each year fishing becomes more difficult and competitive, seem to see beyond their small junk, single family enterprise. This may be true for some others in the tiny Soko Islands fleet, but it is not so for many other fishing people or for a number of the farming families and their children. Such people—the owners of larger and more modern fishing vessels, as well as enterprising farmers like Village Representative Ng Sing Yao and his cousin Ng Kam Chuen—are forcing great changes in the amount and kind of education the Colony is trying to provide for the people of Hong Kong.

The growth in the number of schools and students maintained through the Fish Marketing Organization indicates how one small but important section of Hong Kong Society views the importance of education. In the late 1940s, when the transformation of Hong Kong's large sail-powered junk fleet to a smaller number of diesel-powered vessels was just beginning, FMO-operated schools enrolled about 400 students. By 1974 the FMO was operating 14 schools and seeing to the training of about 4,500 young men and women. How many of these people from fishing boats continue in the fishing business, how many seek jobs ashore as the size of the fishing fleet continues to shrink is difficult to say. But some will stay in the profession—either operating fishing vessels or in some sea-related enterprise—and thus contribute both to the modernization of the fishing industry and to their own families' welfare.

For the more general public, however, and this in recent years has grown to include the farmers from the Soko Islands and other remote areas, the problem is one of much greater numbers and more complex sets of expectations.

Among the early students at the Tai A Chau school was the eldest son of Ng Sing Yao, Village Representative and an intelligent but illiterate man. Ng Sing Yao, a veteran of years of working as a sailor on foreign ships and as a farmer selling his produce to slickers in the Cheung Chau market, knows how people with little education fare. He saw to it that his son did his lessons regularly in the primary school, and was willing to dig up the necessary fees to get the boy into a fairly good "patriotic" secondary school run for the benefit of families sympathetic to the aims of Mao Tse-tung and the People's Republic of China. The boy did well and during his school vacations always came back to help with the island's seasonal pineapple harvest and pig sales. But the expanded range of his education and the limitation of economic opportunities on Tai A Chau have created a problem. The young man is overeducated simply to follow in his father's footsteps as a mildly successful farmer. He would like to do something to help his own people, the Soko Islands, and rural people in general. He is politically aware, but he knows that the technical knowledge he needs and the administrative job he might get to equip him for such a career would come most readily if he could get into university.

But for Ng Sing Yao's son, as for the children of tens of thousands of other Hong Kong parents, the chances of getting into a university in Hong Kong are very, very slim. In 1974, for example, 8,521 students who had completed from 11 to 13 years of primary and secondary education took the entrance exam for the Chinese University of Hong Kong. These applicants were among the cream of the Colony's school system and yet only 2,626 passed. However, only 985 could be admitted to the freshman class, which meant that some 1,600 young men and women, all academically qualified for university level work, had to start looking elsewhere for advanced education or jobs. A boy like Ng Sing Yao's son, bright enough but not brought up in a home or school atmosphere of intense competition where students become "stuffed ducks" as they cram for exams based largely on rote memory, can hardly hope to score high enough on any university entrance exam to get in.

Thus the periodic run of suicides; thus the search for money and scholarships to go abroad; thus the unknown but apparently small number of students who go to the People's Republic of China (where the competition, based on different standards, is similarly tough); and thus the efforts of people in Hong Kong's Education Department to channel students away from the traditional academic programs and into trade schools and technical training institutes.

For years before much was done about it, some educators felt that something was wrong with Hong Kong's schools. They were turning out too many people equipped with prodigious amounts of mathematics and capable of reciting "Hamlet" or the "Classic of Filial Piety," but unable to write a simple digest of the day's news or make an intelligent guess as to how many hospital beds the Colony would need in the next decade. Nor were there enough people versed in textile design, or computer science or commodity marketing, or any of the many specialized fields of knowledge necessary if a newly developing light industrial society is to compete in world markets and give its citizens a decent livelihood.

Over the years patterns of education have changed. In somewhat the same way that Ng Hoy Fok has been able to get some formal and practical education which will help him as a fisherman to cope with fish buyers and storekeepers, others in other parts of Hong Kong society have been able to get—in lieu of the academic education they and their parents would have preferred—technical training for specific kinds of work in a world where careers are becoming both more diversified and more specialized.

Film Dialogue

Interviewer: *Will you send your children on to secondary school?*

Mr. Ng: *No, when they get older they have to help us. And of course we can't afford to let them continue in school.*

Mother: *Ng Hoy Fok will study until he's ready to stop. Then we'll send the two younger ones to school. The small ones left couldn't do anything to help us.*

Mr. Ng: *He'll study for several years. He's already 14 years old . . . he'll study until 17 or 18. We won't have enough money to send him on to secondary school.*

Mother: *How can we poor people afford secondary school?*

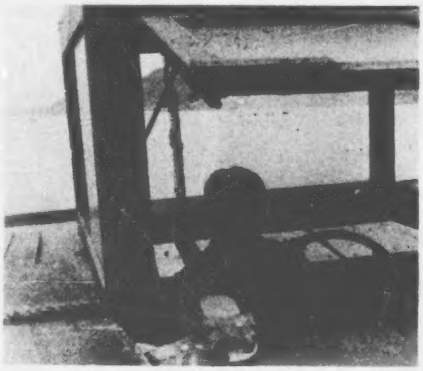
Mr. Ng: *To become a fisherman, in order to do business, to own a boat, you have to be at least 20 to 30 years old. You have to know how the currents run and how to mend nets.*

Mother: *You have to have a brain.*

Interviewer: *Does Ng Hoy Fok know enough about fishing now?*

Mr. Ng: *No, not yet.*

Hoy Fok steering his family's junk.



The process of change has been slow. In 1969, despite much talk and publicity, only 1,900 students were enrolled full-time in the Hong Kong Technical College, and about 20,000 more students were in one- to five-year secondary school programs aimed at producing secretaries, clerks and skilled or semiskilled people for employment in industry. In 1972, the Polytechnic replaced the Hong Kong Technical College and ushered in what looks like a new era in the Colony's education. From a total of 3,000 students enrolled full-time and 15,000 part-time students attending day and evening classes in 1974-75, the Polytechnic by 1980 is scheduled to have 8,000 full-time day and 20,000 part-time students—all taking "practical" courses which should help fit them for jobs in a rapidly changing world.

The kind of professional training now being emphasized by the Hong Kong government in the Polytechnic and lower level trade schools is beyond the reach of Ng Hoy Fok. But the few years of schooling he gets on Tai A Chau serve, in their own way, to upgrade and pragmatize his existence. Hoy Fok may, if he learns to fish as well or better than his father and is able to earn enough to buy and maintain a new and better fishing boat, go through life as a fisherman. He likes junks and he likes fishing. But he knows from market talk and TV and what he sees around him that he may have to seek a livelihood on land.

"How can I go to work on Cheung Chau without learning anything?" he asks. "What can I do?" Hoy Fok knows that illiterates end up with the heaviest and dirtiest work, and he seems determined—whatever may happen in the future—to avoid that fate.

Boy on shrimping vessel; at right, his family at work.

CHINA COAST

3

Rural Economy

CHINA COAST FISHING

By LOREN FESSLER

Fishermen were traditionally isolated from the rest of Chinese society. The boat people of South China were not only looked upon as inferior beings, but also were subject to discriminatory rulings: they were forbidden to reside ashore, and barred from marriage to land people and from competition in the examinations which alone were the door to official employment. While there is no denying the difference in life style, customs, and outlook between boat people and their land-dwelling cousins, there is today compelling evidence that the boat people are indeed just as Chinese as the land dwellers. These differences came about through and were reinforced by occupation and environment—not by ethnic or so-called "racial" origins.

The fishermen's main link with land people was through shore-based, usually literate entrepreneurs whom they called *laan*. While the character for this word in Cantonese designates "store," or "firm," or "company," to people connected with the fishing industry, *laan* means all the various capitalists who buy and sell fish, run stores selling staples such as rice, or operate businesses which build, repair, outfit, and fuel fishing junks—all with credit available, usually at high interest rates. The *laan* and the people who worked the seas for a living had a relationship similar to that between merchant-landlords and agricultural peasants. It is probably not coincidental that, for both *laan* and landlord, illiteracy and indebtedness on the part of fisherman and farmer were desirable things.

For hundreds of years leading up to the Japanese capture of Hong Kong in December 1941, and for about a decade thereafter, the manner and area in which South China fishermen lived and worked changed very little. Wind-powered sailing junks—depending on their size, the season, and the inclination of their owner-operators—ranged north and east from the Pearl River estuary through coastal waters around the Kwangtung and Fukien province border, about 200 air miles from "Hong Kong waters." Some vessels ranged south and west as far as the Tongking Gulf south of Hainan Island, a good 500 miles away.

Prior to the Pacific War, to fisherfolk in this 700- to 800-mile arc, Hong Kong was not particularly different from Amoy, Swatow, Macao, Luichow, Pakoi, Haikow, and other points along the coast. True, it was run by foreigners, and the warships there sometimes fired on fishing boats, charging them with piracy (occasionally with justification). But there were foreign ships with guns all along the China coast, and smart boat people kept far away from all of them. However, when the Japanese occupied Hong Kong after

Pearl Harbor, the people on the sea were affected as well, especially by the Japanese attempt to establish a controlled market for fish in Hong Kong.* Food supplies in general, and particularly rice stocks, became scarce. Some of the larger 50- to 90-foot trawling junks were pressed into service by the Japanese military forces. In the last year of the war, vessels of any kind in Hong Kong harbor or the shipping lanes nearby suffered from American bombings. There is no reliable estimate of how many people from the junk fleet were killed during these attacks, starved to death, or abandoned their boats and sought refuge ashore. But attrition was high, and when the war ended in August 1945, the fisherfolk of the South China Coast had been reduced from about 77,000 in 1938 to just over 26,000. Less than 2,500 fishing junks remained in the four main fishing villages of the Colony, and these surviving vessels were in poor shape—sails, lines, nets, and other gear needed repair.

At the end of the war, moreover, there was good reason to believe that peace would not come to China, that with the Japanese threat eliminated China's long-smouldering civil war would break out again. The British also knew that Chiang Kai-shek, with a large number of American-equipped troops, might try to reclaim Hong Kong in the name of the Republic of China. With its excellent harbor, extensive shipyards, and small but serviceable airfield, Hong Kong was an important base for the defense of what at that time were still very extensive British investments in East Asia. To give it any assurance of stability, Hong Kong needed people and people needed food. Because a continuous supply of agricultural products was in possible jeopardy, the British sought to insure the availability of fish by setting up well-run markets with fair prices for buyer and seller alike. In establishing what became the Fish Marketing Organization (FMO)**—with its mildly socialistic policies of market control, financial aid, and involvement in planning and education—the Colony government contributed greatly to the survival of Hong Kong's peculiar imperialist, laissez-faire capitalism.

During the rest of the decade, the Fish Marketing Organization took on most of the financing, advising, and educational functions it has today. Its services to fishermen, plus consolidation of political control by the People's Republic of China along the coast—where junks had previously fished with little concern for any government—brought an end to the fishermen's migratory ways and resulted in the present Hong Kong-based fishing industry.

Very shortly after the British returned to Hong Kong, fishermen began to see the advantages in the Hong Kong marketing and supply system and started using FMO facilities. As a result more and more vessels registered in Hong Kong, and the tonnage of fish landed and sold went up. The stage was thus set for the technological modernization of the fleet, for the reorganization of the industry, and for gradual changes in the life style and social and economic status of the people who derive their living from the sea.

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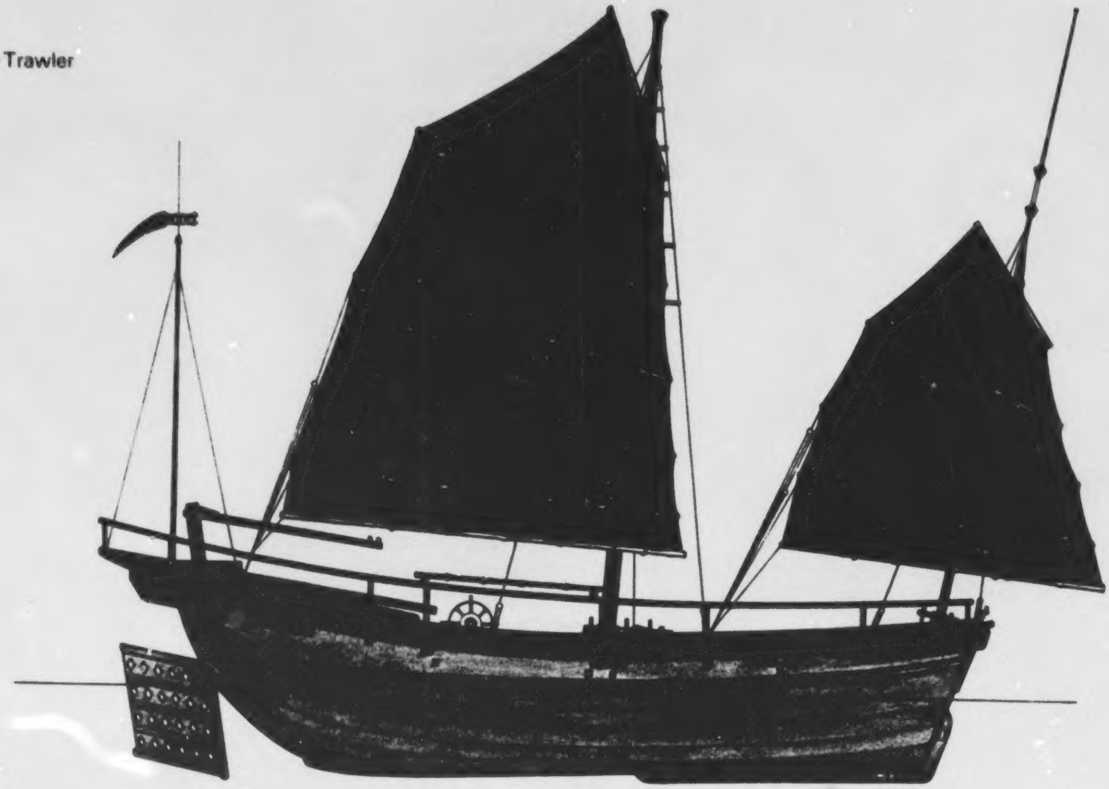
*This attempt was not successful, and once the course of the war started to go against the Japanese, many inhabitants fled to the interior of China and fishermen avoided Hong Kong.

**Biologist Geoffrey A.C. Herklots, who served for more than decade on the faculty of the University of Hong Kong, was a key figure in the development of the FMO. Herklots was no ivory tower professor. During his years in Hong Kong he and his wife were inveterate hikers and naturalists. His keen interest in all manner of flora and fauna is reflected in the large number of publications which he either authored or edited, including a delightful potpourri called *The Hong Kong Countryside*. In 1940 Prof. Herklots began working on methods of purchasing and storing food and fuel for emergency supplies in the event of hostilities. The combination of that experience, his special interest in marine biology, and plenty of time after being taken prisoner to reflect and talk with his fellow campmates contributed to the formation of what is now the Fish Marketing Organization.

Deep Sea Trawler



Until the late 1940s, approximately 60 per cent of all fish caught were processed on board and sold as either salt or dried fish. This was necessary because the slow-moving wind driven vessels with primitive cooling facilities often could not return from the fishing grounds to the market with fresh fish. Vessels with decks and rigging covered with split open and salted fish were a common sight, as were long racks of fish drying on island beaches all around the Colony. A large portion of salt fish sold in Hong Kong was for transport to Canton and other markets in the Pearl River area, and with these markets available through Hong Kong, boats specializing in salt and dried fish sales did well. Fishermen much preferred to sell in Hong Kong, where the currency was stable, supplies available, and corrupt officials were fewer than in inflationary mainland China. Even while this trade flourished, a few enterprising fishermen, encouraged by the FMO and Hong Kong government fisheries research and development specialists, were making cautious moves toward mechanization which would greatly reduce the industry's dependence on salting and drying.

Mechanization in the fishing industry not only means installing engines and adding refrigerator storage, it also means gearing the engines to winches for the strenuous and time-consuming process of bringing in trawling and purse-seining nets. None of this was simple.

A pair trawler of this type was the first Hong Kong fishing junk to be mechanized. The engine was installed in July 1947.

From *Hong Kong Fisheries Bulletin*, No. 2, December 1971.

FILM LINK

Chinese junks, developed through centuries of practical experience, are individually built according to plans that exist only in the heads of experienced and—until recently—usually illiterate craftsmen. Built to be wind powered, they required big, picturesque, and sometimes troublesome sails. They were also permanent homes for entire families, and the design of their living quarters, fishing platforms, and storage units gave them a cork-like characteristic in typhoon-driven seas which was more important than smooth lines for speedy movement. It took two decades to iron out the many technical wrinkles to mechanizing the vessels which now operate out of Hong Kong. In 1954, sail powered junks still predominated (5,803 to 357); by 1974, although the total number of active fishing craft had dropped to 5,400, only 400 of these were solely dependent on sail. The once common and moving sight of hundreds of full sails in the sunset is now rare in Hong Kong waters; today it is oil, more than wind, that moves the fleet.

From the late 1950s through the 1960s, a number of developments contributed to the modernization of Hong Kong's fishing fleet. Improved financing for fishermen, special training for local shipbuilders, and new vessel design combined to make the introduction of a "modern" trawler in the mid-1960s a success. The "Kestrel," first of its type, was launched in June 1965, after almost five years of planning and testing. Sixty-six feet long, powered with a 200-horsepower engine, and equipped with a thermally insulated fishhold, an echo sounder, a direction finder-cum-radio receiver, and a modern compass, this vessel was designed for stern trawling. It began fishing in September 1965 and is still in service.

FILM
LINK

Other vessels of this type, ranging in length from 48 to 90 feet, soon joined the deep sea fleet. By early 1969 there were 29 modern stern trawlers, 56 pair-trawlers, and seven modern long-liners in service. Within two years the "moderns" had increased to some 90 stern trawlers and about 70 pair-trawlers, but still only six or seven long-liners. The number of miscellaneous craft went from 532 in 1951 to a high of 830 in 1961 to 295 in 1969. The variations in these figures resulted in large part from modernization, but politics were also involved.

The political factor was most apparent in 1958 and 1959. The year 1958 initiated a remarkable change in modern Chinese history. The People's Republic, having become disillusioned with the Soviet alliance, embarked on the Great Leap Forward and the establishment of the people's communes. These were radical moves, carried out with considerable enthusiasm and sometimes little tact by cadres often more eager than experienced. The briefly avowed intention of eliminating the last vestiges of capitalism in all aspects of Chinese society frightened a lot of people—including petty capitalist boat owners. Thus, between March 1958—when the Great Leap slogans were just beginning to be voiced and the communes were not yet heard of—and the following year when the two movements had gone into full swing, more than 600 long-liners and 1,500 gill-netters had, as Hong Kong government people put it, "migrated" to Hong Kong. The increase in trawlers was less than 200 and was insignificant for miscellaneous vessels. The winter of 1960-61 was economically the bitterest of three bad years in China following the Great Leap. The Hong Kong fleet has been shrinking gradually but steadily since 1961.

Today about 95 per cent of the vessels registered in Hong Kong are also registered in one of the People's Republic of China communes nearby. This "dual registry" is necessary because the Chinese government does not recognize Hong Kong registration of fishing vessels. To the PRC all fishing vessels manned by Chinese are Chinese, and all vessels fishing in Chinese waters are, once a year, to be registered at a port in the PRC. Registration generally takes place around the Chinese New Year (now called Spring Festival in China), which is based on the lunar calendar and usually falls in February. The owner or master of a vessel apparently need not take his vessel to the commune with him at this time.* He takes his "papers," registers, perhaps attends a political meeting, and then returns to Hong Kong. He will also be assigned a quota of fish to be delivered to the commune in the coming year. It is difficult to determine what percentage of the catch fishermen are supposed to supply to the commune, or what happens if they fail to deliver, but the best estimate is that in 1973 the commune cut was about 10 per cent.

* * * * *

Fishing Methods

It is physically difficult to learn about fishermen. Inshore fishing boats are constantly on the move, day and night. There is little if any extra room on fishing vessels for "observers." Nonworking people aboard get in the way, may cause a loss of income, and are thus unwelcome. Moreover, many fishing boats are both living and working areas. People living in these cramped conditions develop in-group techniques for preserving privacy, and an outsider can be a source of considerable embarrassment. Detailed accounts of the sociology of junk families scarcely exist. While it is unwise then to generalize or speculate much about the private actions and thoughts of fishing people, it is possible to describe what is involved in the different kinds of fishing and to assess their economic importance.**

Trawling

The most important type of fishing in Hong Kong, in terms of percentage of catch, is trawling. There are three categories of trawlers, determined by the method used to tow a net or nets along the sea bottom.

*Hong Kong authorities are not specific about this. One version is that a skipper may leave his vessel and crew (for most smaller vessels with one or no sampans this usually means members of his family) in Hong Kong and travel to the commune overland or on some friend's junk.

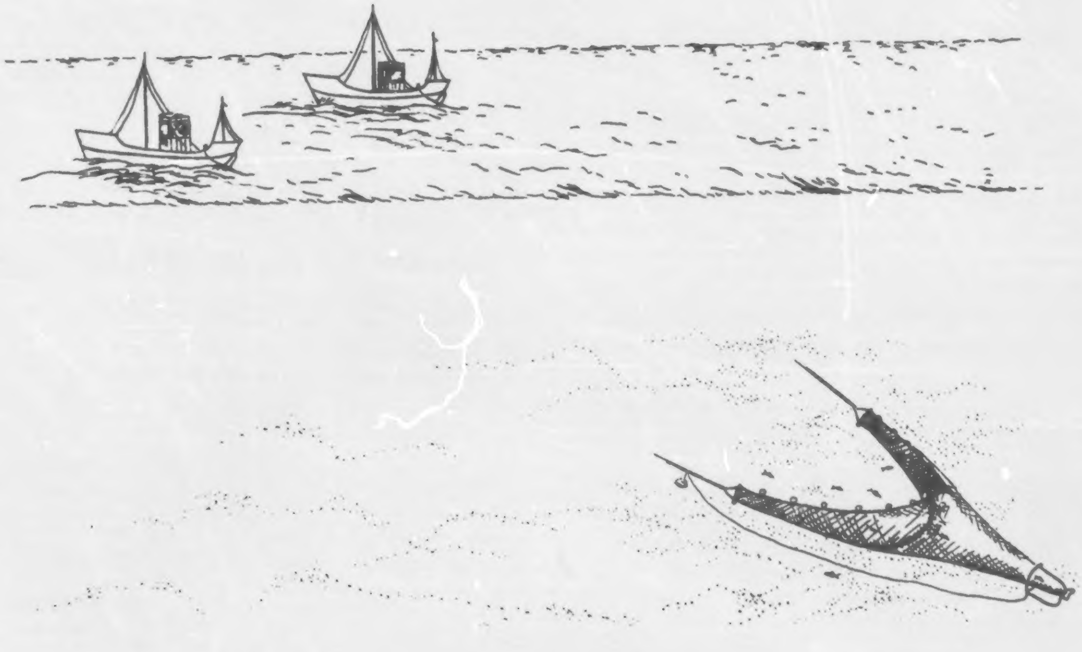
**A combination of inbred suspicion and concern about getting involved in any kind of time-consuming hassle between Western camera crews and authorities from the PRC or Vietnam makes it vitually impossible to film deep sea fishing out of Hong Kong. Therefore, all the scenes in the accompanying films were shot on smaller junks operating in Hong Kong waters.

An ancient and spectacular kind of trawling, which one can still glimpse occasionally from the balcony of the Bela Vista Hotel in Macao some 40 air miles from Hong Kong, is pair-trawling. Two long, galleon-like junks, huge sails suspended wing-like from towering masts, sweep majestically along trying to keep about the distance of a football field between them. Secured to a winch on each vessel is one end of a strong line. To each end of the line is attached a huge bag net, shaped like a somewhat flattened butterfly. Net size varies, but most have "mouths" 80 to 115 feet across. The net is put into the water from the sides of these trawlers while they are under way, with weights on the bottom lines and floats on the top lines to keep them open vertically. The parallel course of the junks keeps the "mouth" (technically the "head") open horizontally as the net is towed along the bottom.

Trawling can be carried out only in areas where the bottom is fairly level and free from sharp rocks or coral formations. In a "normal" haul a pair of trawlers cast the net, trawl for about three hours, stop and pull in the net over the bow, remove the catch, and then ready the net for another cast. A haul or a run takes three to four hours and most fishermen try to make at least four hauls a day when engaged in deep-sea fishing (20 to 70 fathoms, 120 to 420 feet below the surface).

Crew size varies with the size and type of vessel, starting with about a dozen persons each for smaller pair-trawlers and as high as 15 or more in large old-fashioned vessels. Pair-trawlers working out of Hong Kong operate as much as 500 miles away, off the Vietnam coast.

Pair-trawling.



The longer a vessel can stay in productive fishing grounds the more money the owner and crew will make. Among the factors which limit fishing time are the size and efficiency of a vessel's fishholds. The fresher fish seem when they get to market, the better price they fetch. Vessels with large, well-refrigerated holds and fast cruising speeds can fish longer than slower boats with less efficient holds. A study of one pair of Japanese steel-hulled trawlers built in 1947 and purchased in Hong Kong secondhand, shows that over a five-year period, 1965-1970, the time spent for each trip averaged 18 days.* Newer, better-equipped trawlers—some of which now have ice-producing refrigeration units aboard—can stay out much longer. Older, more conventional trawlers, like the stately pairs sometimes seen cruising out of Macao to work the mud flats at the mouth of the Pearl River, cannot stay out so long.

Beam trawlers seldom operate with sails (at least in Hong Kong waters). They are mainly used for catching prawns and are generally called shrimp trawlers or shrimpers, although they can and do bring up many other types of marine life. Beam trawlers predominate in the Hong Kong fleet, and in the 1969 count of vessels not one unmechanized shrimper was listed.

In beam-trawling two or more nets are payed out from hinged beams, one on each side of the vessel. The number and size of the nets depend on the size and power of the craft. Small shrimpers like the 36-foot vessel with a 16-horsepower engine shown in the film, use only two nets. Such vessels are frequently seen by passengers on ferries connecting Hong Kong with Macao and the outer island ports of Cheung Chau, Tai O, etc. Large shrimpers, their long beams reaching far out and giving them the appearance of some surface-borne winged sea creature, are more than 60 feet long and have engines generating 150 or more horsepower. These larger craft use as many as six nets at a time. Shrimp nets are the smallest in size and mesh of any in the trawler category, but the basic technique of slithering nets along the mud or sand on the sea bed is the same for all trawlers. Trawling for prawns and other crustacea as well as molluscs is mainly an inshore operation. Within a 120-mile radius of Hong Kong, the larger beam-trawlers bring in catches weighing as much as 70-some tons.

The most efficient but least picturesque of all trawlers is the stern-trawler, which looks rather like a tugboat. Like pair-trawlers, which they will probably replace eventually, they fish in deep waters, often far from Hong Kong ports. Their great advantage is that they are designed to operate with smaller crews than the pair trawlers; they cast or "shoot" their net over the low stern, an operation requiring fewer hands than putting out a net over the side. Once in the water, the net may trail more than half a mile behind the trawler. Its mouth is kept open by a variety of ingenious devices—some called "otter doors" or "stabilized depressors" (developed and patented locally). When a run is finished, the net is pulled in and up over the stern using a diesel-powered winch. An 80-foot modern trawler can carry about 130 tons of fish and operate with a total crew of eight to ten. This reduction in size of crew, combined with the speed with which hauls can be made and new improved fishholds, makes these vessels increasingly attractive investments. The growing popularity of this kind of vessel is also contributing to the tendency for fishermen to move into family dwellings ashore, where the children attend school and acquire customs once associated only with land people.

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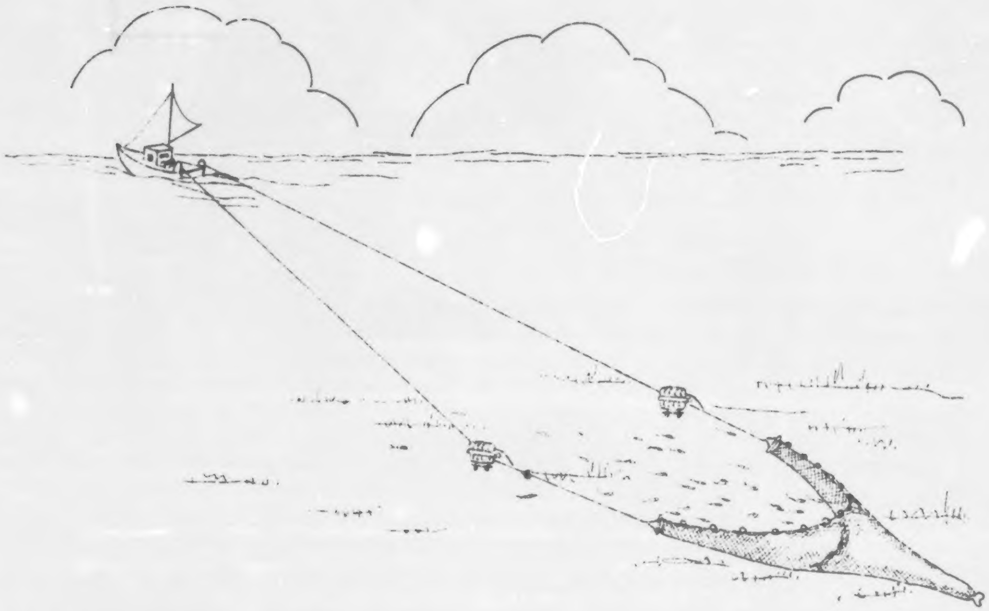
*This broke down into 12 days actual fishing, two days back to port, two in port, and two days back to the fishing grounds.

Stern-trawling



Long-liners

The last type of deep sea fishing vessel which is important to the Hong Kong industry is the liner, or long-liner. Although there are several categories of long-liners, based on size or typical catch, their basic method of fishing is the same—one or more long lines with many, many baited hooks attached. Most long-liners fish for "Golden Thread,"* a brightly colored fish in waters worked by the Hong Kong fleet. In 1968 these fish constituted about 12 per cent by weight and almost 20 per cent by value of the total marine fish catch; there have been no indications since then of serious decline in its availability. The approximately 900 long-liners in the Hong Kong fleet account for about 90 per cent of the Golden Thread take, while trawlers, working inshore waters from March to May when the Golden Thread spawn, bring in the rest.

*Called "Hung Saam" or "Red Clothed" in Cantonese.

There are two basic types of long-liner: the conventional junk with low bow and high stern, designed originally for sail propulsion (about 80 per cent are now equipped with diesel engines) and the modern liner, whose low and clear stern was designed for diesel engines. Within these two types there are three categories—determined by the number of sampans (small wooden vessels sculled by a single oar) the vessel carries. Big long-liners carry five or more sampans, medium long-liners carry from one to four sampans,and small long-liners carry none at all.

A Day in the Life of a Long-liner

The day begins before dawn. Breakfast consists of rice, fish, maybe some vegetables, and tea, all prepared by the female cook most liners employ. Then the fishermen move quickly to prepare the lines; baiting the hooks is particularly tedious and requires fast, sure fingers.* When the lines are baited and ready, they are put into the wooden sampans.

It is still early morning, the sun low on the horizon, when the sampans push off from the liner. Two sampans form a working unit: one pays out the line and the other hauls it in. On the line-paying sampan, one crewman sculls while the other secures one

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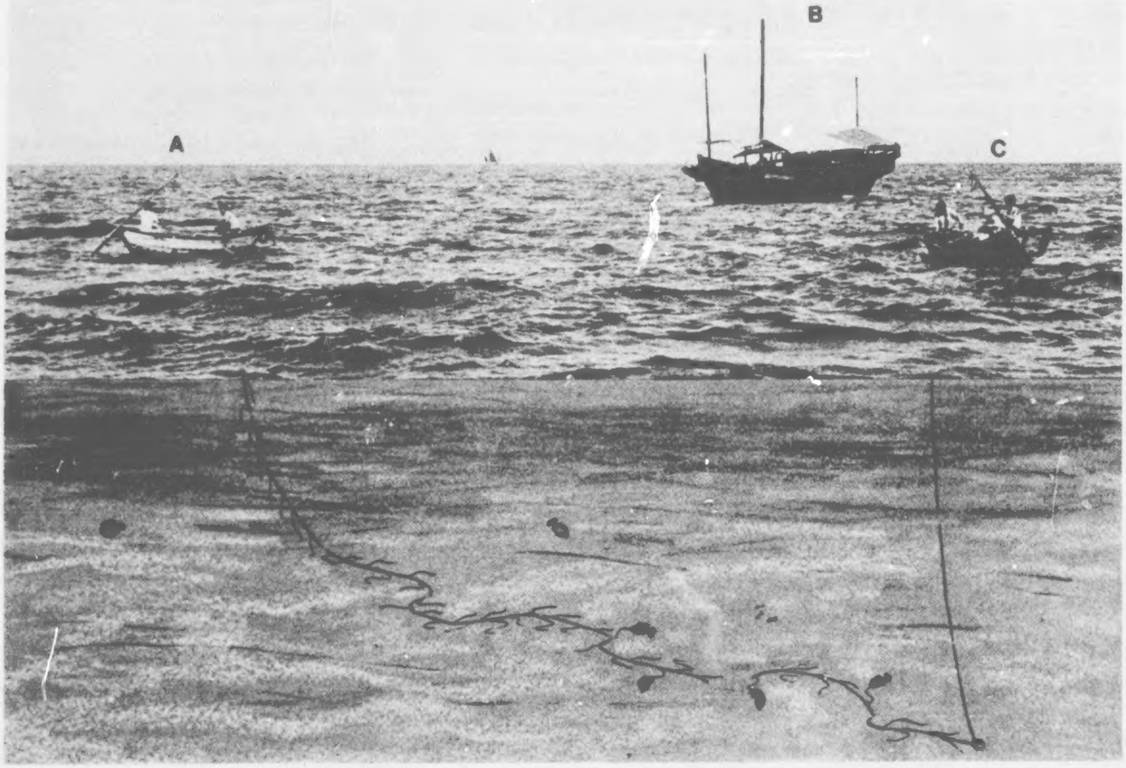
*Long-lining is probably the most exhausting type of fishing for the individual fisherman. Mr. Au Lai-shing, Fisheries Extension Officer in the Agriculture and Fisheries Department, points out that the cost of the large crew alone is 40 to 60 per cent of a boat's annual expenditure. According to Mr. Au, "another problem inherent in the nature of this fishing method is. . . the physical hardship and inconveniences long-line fishermen must endure. On a conventional long-liner, the provision of fresh water and sleeping quarters is seldom adequate, and a fisherman is often required to work an average of 18 hours a day: 12 hours fishing and the remainder baiting and repairing gear. For these reasons, working on conventional long-liners has never been popular among professional fishermen.



Long-lining technique. (a) paying sampan, (b) mother vessel, (c) hauling sampan.

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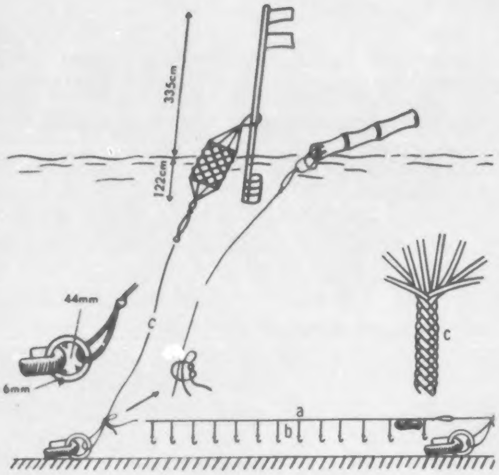


end of the hook-laden line to a buoy line and pays the baited lines over the side and out into the water. The buoy lines are measured so that they allow the baited hooks to dangle slightly above the floor of the sea. The buoys, which are usually pieces of bamboo 12 to 14 feet high attached to some kind of weighted floating base, are topped with one or more small identifying cloth flags (see Illustration). With the line fastened to the buoy, the sampan moves out dropping off line, stopping only to tie the end of one line to the beginning of the next. At the end of the fourth line, a lead or stone sinker, another buoy line and buoy, and the beginning of the fifth line are attached. In this way, the buoys mark and keep the line floating at intervals of about 300 hooks.

Hand-liners

Hong Kong still has about 500 hand-liners, whose total take apparently is not great (or not known). However, one knowledgeable Fisheries Department Official says that hand-line fishermen—again using longish lines strung with numerous hooks—can make a fairly good living by specializing in the sale of live fish to seafood restaurants. In Hong Kong it is very common to see the front wall of a restaurant made in large part of window tanks. Customers with plenty of cash can choose from among brightly colored parrot fish, giant perch sometimes four feet long, and a variety of evil-looking, delicious-tasting eels. A junk master engaged in hand-lining with a good outlet for fresh fish, if he is skilled and has good luck, may do rather well—with none of his catch being routed (or reported) through the Fish Marketing Organization.

Purse Seining

Purse seining, popular in many parts of the world, is declining in Hong Kong, perhaps owing to the diminished catch in shallow waters (120 feet deep or less).* Purse seining takes place mostly at night, close to shore in estuaries and bays. And it is not an easy way to make a living. The long night fishing sessions, with a bright incandescent light to attract the fry and fingerlings, are wearying. The seine net, which has to be towed into place from the mother junk by a sampan, is big and heavy. Once the net is in position, the crew in the sampan has to "plunge" or "plunk" the water using long poles with small plunger-like tips to spook the fish toward the open jaws of the net. When the jaws of the seine are pursed shut and the bottom closed with a draw line, the top of the net, kept afloat with plastic foam buoys, is also drawn in toward the junk. Aboard the junk a line leading to the seine net is hauled in using the vessel's winch. Some of the crew supports the net to prevent fish falling back into the sea; others work on deck taking the fish out of the net and sorting them into wooden or plastic containers. In two "throws" or "shoots" of a large net in Hong Kong harbor, the total take was only about 65 pounds of small, rough fish—edible but of little commercial value.

*Although Hong Kong Agriculture and Fisheries Department said in 1974 that there was no evidence that pollution or over-fishing was a problem in Hong Kong territorial waters, it has initiated an inshore fishing survey of propagation and nursery areas, which may provide "a biological basis on which the effect of marine pollution on the inshore fishery resources could be scientifically assessed in the future."

A family purse-seining operation in Hong Kong harbor.

Gill-netting

Gill-netters are probably the poorest of all Hong Kong fishermen, but in 1975 there were still between 1,500 and 2,000 active in the Colony area. "Father Wong" and others operating from Tai A Chau* rely mainly on gill-nets for their living. In its simplest form, gill-netting, which is family-oriented and subsistence fishing, requires only three things—a net, a boat, and a person using the boat to set and retrieve the net. Tai A Chau fishermen usually set their nets directly from their motorized junk. They set one or more nets in different spots where they think fish may be. Then some of the family members may scull the auxiliary sampan and plunk the water with long poles to chase fish into the hanging nets. Meanwhile Father Wong himself and others in the family chug away in the junk to set out baited long lines and traps for lobsters, or to seek molluscs and firewood on the many rocky islets near Tai A Chau. With his medium-sized junk Father Wong and his family can count on around US$3,000 to $4,000 income a year, with the long gill-nets (vaguely resembling tennis nets) producing most of the take.

*See the film and essay entitled "Hoy Fok and the Island School."

FILM
LINK

LANDINGS OF FRESH MARINE FISH AND INVERTEBRATES AT WHOLESALE FISH MARKETS

JANUARY TO DECEMBER, 1970. LANDINGS BY GEAR — ALL MARKETS

BY GEAR	Metric tons	%	Value (HK$)	%
Trawlers	48,490.09	64.01	69,687,382.92	53.03
Liners	10,876.25	14.36	31,973,026.04	24.33
Purse Seiners	5,141.06	6.79	4,036,126.34	3.07
Gill-netters	5,504.01	7.26	13,865,804.62	10.55
Others	3,685.54	4.87	6,806,259.77	5.18
Imported	2,055.50	2.71	5,048,494.83	3.84
Total	75,752.45	100.00	131,417,094.52	100.00

Father Wong mending gill nets.

To people who operate on a very thin financial margin, the great advantage of gill-netting is that no bait or costly gear is involved. On Golden Thread liners, for example, where the capital investment for boat and gear is high, bait costs run between 5 and 9 per cent of total operating expenditures. Even for hand-line fishermen, with little gear other than hooks and line, bait must be bought or caught before there is any hope of profitable fishing. With gill-netting, however, all that is needed is to get the net into the water—at the right place at the right time.

When life began to change for fishermen along the South China Coast three decades ago, for some the changes were vast and rapid; for others the process has been slower.

Fishing captains who had foresight, or capital, or good connections, or luck opted early for mechanization. These people, operating bigger, faster, and more efficient vessels, are among the ones whose lives have changed most. They are the fishing people with only the father and older sons working at sea, while the family keeps a home ashore and children may go full time to school.They are the people whose vessels—shrimpers, seiners or whatever—have winches to help with the heavy pulling. Many of the deep-sea vessels which bring in refrigerated cargoes of garoupa, lizard fish, Conger eel, and shark to the Aberdeen Wholesale Fish Market on Hong Kong Island are owned or crewed by people like these. They might be called Hong Kong's "commercial" fishermen, and they are the kind of people technocrats, like Mr. Y.S. Tsang from the Agriculture and Fisheries Department, know and are dedicated to helping. More and more of the offspring of these families take land jobs or marry nonfishing partners and enter completely new styles of life.

Others, like the family headed by "Father Wong," have trailed far behind as modernization has altered the fishing industry. They have adapted to diesel engines and use transistor radios for weather, market news, entertainment, and informal education. But hampered by illiteracy, or stubbornness, or a crippling lack of capital caused by decades of continuing indebtedness to the usurious "*laans*," these people hang on as subsistence fishermen.

The Wongs, of marginal importance in Hong Kong's fishing economy, are the slowly changing remnants of an ancient society and profession being displaced by technology and social forces. Some may survive as fishermen. Others will be forced ashore and into strange land jobs. All of them face a future more full of change than the past.

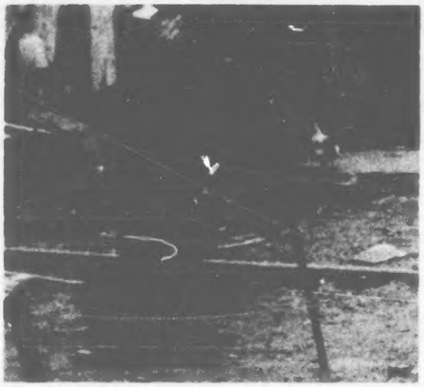
CHINA COAST

4

Women

THREE ISLAND WOMEN

by LOREN FESSLER



Chan So Mui.

Fan Gau Mui.

Wong Kuen Mui.

Chan So Mui, Fan Gau Mui, and Wong Kuen Mui: three women, three generations, living in three quite different worlds. All three women have spent large portions of their lives on or near the island of Tai A Chau, on the southwest edge of the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong. While none can be called "typical" of any particular age group, social or economic class, each represents differing aspects of and prospects for changing lifestyles among rural women in the region.

Chan So Mui is a widow, aged between 85 and 90, and awaiting death. Her vision has blurred, her body has twisted and bent. Much of her time is spent in a small beached sampan next to her granddaughter's house in the Lower Village near the Tai A Chau dock area. The location is a convenient if not a prestigious one. The Widow Chan can keep track of most of the population's activities, she is alert to the arrival of visitors who might listen to her sympathetically, and she has easy access to the medical staff and facilities aboard the *S.S. Chee Hong.**

Fan Gau Mui is a mother of four, married to a sailor. A land-based woman in her mid-thirties, she is accustomed to responsibility; her sea-going husband, like most men in the village, is seldom home. When asked who has the most say in the village's decision-making process, Fan Gau Mui smiled and replied, "Fifty-fifty."

Wong Kuen Mui is the eldest daughter of a fishing family. She is in her early twenties and considers herself—and is considered by her family—ready for marriage. All her life has been spent aboard the family's fishing junk. Her fiancee is likewise from a fishing family, as it is still unusual for fishing families and land-based families to intermarry.

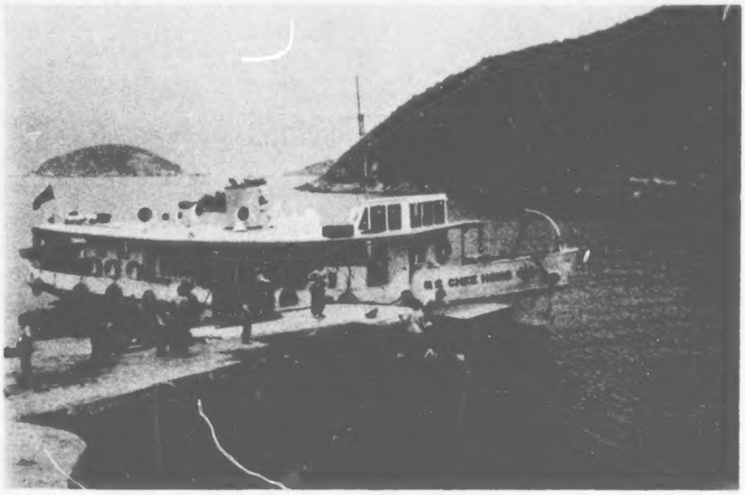
Between wrinkled old Chan So Mui and sturdy, sharp-eyed Fan Gau Mui there is much more than 50 years. There is a vastly changed world. Chan So Mui, when she reminisces, recalls times past in the waters and islands around Hong Kong. Her memories are of large fleets of sailing junks, of marauding pirates, Cantonese opera troupes performing for annual festivals, long lines of salted drying fish, of stormy seas and constant seasickness, of Japanese gunboats, and more recently of growing old.

Young Wong Kuen Mui has some common bonds with both aged Chan So Mui and mature Fan Gau Mui. As a married woman Chan So Mui spent many years of her life aboard a fishing junk. She says she hated every minute of it and couldn't wait to live

Women on Tai A Chau do the same kind of heavy work as the men.

ashore. Wong Kuen Mui has lived all her life on fishing junks, but she likes the life and has little expectation of living elsewhere. Like Fan Gau Mui she is strong and skilled in every aspect of work necessary to her family's welfare. Both these women can and do perform the same kind of work as men.

Unlike Chan So Mui, Fan Gau Mui was too young when the Japanese occupied Tai A Chau in 1942 to remember the burning and killing. She belongs to the generation of islanders who take small diesel-powered boats and inter-island communication for granted, although she can still recall working in Tai A Chau's now abandoned rice fields. In those days, villagers could reach the nearest market town, on Cheung Chau, only by sailboat. Even today, her interests and responsibilities confine Fan Gau Mui to the small island she has always known.



S. S. Chee Hong is operated by the medical and health department of the Hong Kong government.

The South China Coast before 1940

From its beginning in 1843, British rule had an enormous impact on the urban areas of the Hong Kong Colony, the tiny Western enclave clinging to the China Coast. Life on islands as remote as Tai A Chau changed much more slowly. Back when Chan So Mui was born, the Colony consisted only of Hong Kong Island (Victoria), Stonecutters Island, and a small portion of the Kowloon (Nine Dragon) Peninsula. In 1888, the once-powerful Ching Dynasty, run by alien Manchus, was rapidly falling apart. For years before and after that time the Empire was mostly in the hands of a powerful woman, the Empress Dowager Tzu-hsi, whose marvelous talents for court intrigue, alas, were not matched by similar skills for ruling a country buffeted by internal dissent and foreign aggression.

Because she lived on the islands, neither the events in China nor in the Colony significantly affected Chan So Mui during the first six decades of her life. True, in 1898 and 1899 there was some fuss in the Hong Kong-Canton area when the "Fan Kwai Loh" or "Foreign Devils," as the British and other foreigners are still called, took control of the islands and peninsula which now constitute the New Territories. The new foreigners who eventually came to the islands to map them and check on land ownership meant little to women such as Chan So Mui. By and large the "Kwai Loh" left both the fishermen and the farmers in the New Territories alone. And the islanders liked it that way. People relied on themselves, their relatives, and traditional forms of community organizations to protect their interests. Wherever possible they followed the old axiom of avoiding any but absolutely inescapable contact with government; it mattered not whether government was represented by the strangely hued and oddly smelling foreigners or the almost equally strange but more difficult to deceive "officials" from one or another of the various warlords contending for power in South China.

Film Dialogue

In my house, the children get into my things. I have money. In the old days there were policemen here. We were fugitives then. There were gunboats in the East Bay. The policemen on the gunboats carried big guns and had cannons. I'm not exaggerating. When we fled from the Japanese you weren't even born. Yes, I've seen everything. It's all true.

There were pirates here in the past?

Yes, but now there are none.

When did they leave?

When the communists came. I know all about it! I know everything about the past. We fled by day and by night.

Interview with Chan So Mui

Hong Kong Colony's officials believed that the best government is the one which governs least. The policy was well-suited to laissez-faire British businessmen and local Chinese alike. But government there was, nonetheless, and one of the things the British did was to conduct a census in 1911. Although it may have been flawed in detail, its broad findings point to a significant characteristic of Hong Kong society at that time: Hong Kong, or at least the central Colony area, was a man's world.

Men in those days came to this Chinese place ruled by foreigners to work handling cargo, or making and repairing ships, or making rope, or doing any of the dozens of "coolie" type jobs which make a port city go. The money they earned, at least some of it, went back to help support parents, younger brothers and sisters, and wives and children. In that 1911 census, out of a total of 456,739 people recorded, only 160,588 were female, a ratio of 10 women to every 18 men.

Legal, Social, and Economic Status Pre-1940

Men dominated by more than numbers. As a typical Chinese woman of the time, when Chan So Mui became a wife, her status as a female chattel was transferred from parents to her husband. Parents could, under Chinese customary law, beat, sell, or even kill a female child if the circumstances seemed to warrant the action. Once a girl married, she became the property of her husband and his family. Although family and community relationships in a society noted for its stability militated against a wife's mistreatment "without reason," powerful men did not have to care about reprisals from the woman's relatives or the community. Women could—and many did—suffer beatings, extreme indignities, and abandonment, with little resource other than suicide.

Film Dialogue

Woman: *Men and women are equal. What men can do, women can do. It wasn't that way before. In the past husbands were almighty. It's not that way now. They return for a short time, then go to sea again.*

Interview with Woman
Washing Clothes

Not only was divorce denied women in a traditional Chinese marriage, there was also no release through widowhood. Remarriage, even for very young widows, was a severe offense to propriety. A widow's duty was to remain in her husband's family and serve her mother-in-law and any children of the marriage. She was also expected to perform ritual sacrifices so that her husband's spirit, properly cared for, would not wander unhappily in some uncertain hell or return angrily to bring ill fortune on the family.

When Hong Kong officially became a Crown Colony in 1843, the legal system was modeled largely on British law. However, where Chinese customs were considered important to the "natives" and unlikely to conflict with British interests, those customs were allowed to remain. Accordingly, "Customary Chinese Marriage," as it came to be called, remained legal in Hong Kong. Even when China's Manchu Dynasty was overthrown in 1911, and the status of women was improved through legislative reform, Hong Kong preserved the old marriage customs. In 1930 the Republic of China, dominated by Chiang Kai-shek and his Wellesley-educated wife Soang Mei-ling, promulgated a marriage reform law aimed at giving women more equality in both marriage and divorce. British males (without strenuous objection to a system which made compliant mistresses readily available) ran Hong Kong in cooperation with Chinese capitalists (well able to afford two, three, or more wives or concubines); they saw no need for such radical reforms. Serious pressure for similar reform was not to come to Hong Kong until after women like Fan Gau Mui were born in the 1940s.

Women, Education, and Ideology

Attitudes in Hong Kong were essentially conservative, elitist, and nationalistic—among both Chinese and British alike. Although women had some heroic role in Chinese fiction (there is even one Gulliver-like volume about a society run by women, as well as the popular legend of Tuan Mu-lan, a Chinese heroine à la Joan of Arc), historical circumstances militated strongly against educating women—particularly to the point where they might play some role in life outside the family.

Probably the strongest impediment to educational equality with men came from the Confucian tradition. As Confucianism had evolved, it emphasized authoritarian relationships between ruler and ruled, father and son, and man and woman. Until a woman achieved the status of mother, she was very near the bottom of the pecking order; she moved up slowly as she became first a mother-in-law, and finally a grandmother. Female inferiority was preserved by footbinding, practiced by families sufficiently affluent to afford the crippling effect "lily feet" had on a woman's ability to work (or run away).

The Taiping Rebellion, the violent expression of a nineteenth century revolutionary movement attacking many Confucian tenets in its strange blend of Christian-influenced and anti-Manchu ideology, may have produced a backlash effect on what feminist sympathy existed. The iconoclastic movement began in South China in 1850-51 and was not crushed until 1864. By then the rebels had ruled Nanking on the Yangste River for a decade and seriously threatened not only Manchu rule but also foreign commerce in Shanghai. Professor Eugene Boardman in a study titled *Christian Influence Upon The Ideology Of The Taiping Rebellion* noted,

> Taiping discipline and their egalitarian treatment of women were unusual. Women could hold equal civil and military positions with men. Footbinding was forbidden. Marriage was a matter for arrangement by the individuals concerned.... The higher evaluation of female personality...may have reflected the treatment accorded women worshippers by Roberts [an American Southern Baptist] in Canton and by missionaries whom Hung Jen-kan [a Taiping leader] saw in Hong Kong.

The Taiping rebels even had one woman leader, Su San-niang, who joined early in the revolt, bringing a group of secret society members with her. But many of the positive aspects of the Taiping Rebellion which the Chinese Communists like to publicize today—equal distribution of land, destruction of idols, and equality for women—were anathema to the kind of bourgeois Chinese in port cities (such as Shanghai) who were in a position to consider the possible advantages of Western (meaning Christian) education for their children. In their view, this unfilial group of rebels with its unorthodox practices had been responsible for illness, famine, and death, many in battle, of millions of people. Furthermore, the leaders—so the stories went—had eventually given themselves up to sexual debauchery with the very women who were supposedly their respected equals. Who, then, could argue that giving women the same kind of education as men was necessarily a good thing?

And look what had happened to China after that, when the Empress Dowager had connived her way into power in Peking. She had made herself Regent, poisoning her opponents, relying on eunuchs, squandering the nation's resources on decorative stone ships while the crafty Japanese used foreign style ships to defeat the Chinese navy, and all the while foreign aggressors had taken more and more of China under their control. With the Empress Dowager as an example, who wanted any more women involved in Chinese politics?

Obviously these anti-feminist arguments were neither wholeheartedly supported nor successful. Another Cantonese rebel, Dr. Sun Yat-sen, took as his second wife an American-educated woman, Soong Ching-ling, who quickly became important to him in his efforts to unify China. When Sun Yat-sen died in 1925, Madame Soong remained active in China's political life, and 50 years later, although rheumatic and crotchety, she was alive in Peking serving as a Vice Minister of the People's Republic of China. (One of Madame Soong's sisters, Soong Mei-ling, better known as Madame Chiang Kai-shek, has also been deeply involved in her husband's political struggle for almost half a century on the island of Taiwan.)

Mao Tse-tung, perhaps out of affection for a gentle mother who gave him sympathy when his peasant father gave him blows, early rebelled against China's traditional unequal treatment of women. He refused to consummate an arranged marriage and, like a number of other important Chinese leaders (Chou En-lai, Liu Shao-chi, Lin Piao, and Chiao Kuan-hua), married a "modern" girl of his own choice. Women have played an important role in establishing and running the People's Republic of China, and in the Fourth National People's Congress chosen in January 1975, the ratio of women to men among the 2,885 deputies was slightly more than one in five.*

Film Dialogue

What do you do for fun ashore? Do you see your boy friend?

That's hard to say. When we go to Cheung Chau, if his boat is there, we can see each other.

Interview with Wong Kuen Mui

Despite this representational evidence of the rising status of women in Chinese society, the extreme male chauvinist assertion that women would be best kept pregnant, illiterate, and hobbled by bound feet, has not died. Such extremists are few, but the feeling remains strong that women are bad news in politics. Salacious gossip among the Soong sisters used to be commonplace; to this day old Kuomintang (Nationalist Party, or KMT) diehards blame Madame Chiang for depending on the United States to help in the Civil War against Mao Tse-tung. And there has been a constant stream of stories, mostly based on planted rumors or unfounded allegations, claiming that Chiang Ching, Mao's fourth and presumably last wife, was the evil genius behind the Cultural Revolution, that she was plotting with Lin Piao to take over power, that she was allied with (or against) Chou En-lai. Wouldn't it be terrible, it is implied, for China and the world if the ex-movie actress were to succeed to power after Mao dies?

* * * * *

The changes which have come about in attitudes toward the role of women in China today have been a century in the making. From a welter of little-known beliefs and practices of unconventional groups such as the Taiping rebels, from Christian and Marxist teachings, new ideas have filtered slowly and unevenly to become a part of Chinese culture in rural Hong Kong.

Modern Chinese Women: Education, Social Class, and Economic Mobility

Hong Kong has a complicated and fluid class structure with a wide variety of social and economic types. In rural communities and on the Colony's outlying islands and among boat-dwelling fishing families, women still have low literacy rates, and their knowledge about matters slightly removed from the immediate work and living area is limited. In urban Hong Kong there are women to whom doctoral degrees, fluency in two or more languages, charge accounts, and knowledge of legal matters are taken for granted. There are tens of thousands of factory workers—semiliterate girls whose quick eyes and nimble fingers working on spindles and miniconductors mean textiles, calculators, and money for rice, or prefaded jeans and maybe for little brothers' school fees. There is middle-aged Mother, with a primary school education strong in outmoded Victorian and Confucian concepts, who married Father—the man of her parents' choice—when she was age 16. Multiply her by many, many thousands. There are throngs of girls in or headed for high school and the limited number of places in the universities. If successful, these girls may go on to become teachers, or doctors, or respected career women—with or without families of their own. And there are all the girls who go only a short distance along the educational escalator before they go to work in the family's tiny store, or hire out, for a few years before marrying, at low wages as office help, waitresses, or salesgirls.

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*Were a similar proportion of women to serve in the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, there would be 118 women in Congress.

Hong Kong women.

One of the greatest factors promoting change in the status of Hong Kong women has been education, but there too progress has been slow. Two decades after the Ching Dynasty ended, four women in five still could not read or write. The rate in rural areas was lower than that. Today, one must speak of education from a broader perspective. There is the kind of education that comes from schools and that which comes from an expanded flow of information and ideas through newspapers, radio, TV, and word-of-mouth dissemination in the marketplace, factories, or at festive gatherings. It is much more difficult to assess the "volume" or "rate of spread" of informal education in Hong Kong than it is to check censal literacy reports or school enrollment. But such means as noting the annual increase in the number of licenses issued for radios, for example, provides a rough indicator: in 1951 the Colony had more than 50,000 radio receiving sets. In 1959 there were about 85,000 licensed sets, and by 1961 there were 132,594 radio licenses—with estimates for total number of sets running more than twice that. In 1968 the estimate was a million sets, and by now it would be a rare family dwelling or fishing boat which did not have at least one radio receiver. The increase in television sets has been similarly rapid, with the result that tens of thousands of farmers and fishing people who ten years ago might not have seen a movie more often than once or twice a year can now see newscasts and full length films nightly.

This spread of informal education affecting men and women alike, has been paralleled by a similar and equally recent increase in basic formal education. In 1951 Hong Kong had a total of 381 kindergarten and primary schools. By 1961 the number had risen to 1,358 and by 1971 to 1,547. For those same years enrollments were 136,684 (primary school only), 279,903 and 761,395—more than fivefold increase in 20 years, with the number of female students increasing from around 50,000 to more than 400,000—an eightfold increase. In this period the illiteracy rate dropped markedly, with the greatest percentile decrease being among women.

Rural Education: Farmers and Fishermen

By 1971 almost three of every four females aged five or older were either in school or had been in school long enough to be able to read and write, but the ratio was much lower in many of Hong Kong's rural areas. Of the three island women at Tai A Chau, for example, none has ever gone to school. There was no school on the island until 1961, and thus Fan Gau Mui, like many rural women in their mid-thirties, is as illiterate as old Widow Chan.

Among fishing families, too, the literacy rate remains lower than that for the rural farming population. This too is changing, however, as most fisherfolk are becoming shore-based and hired crews are substituted for the labor of a fisherman's wife and children while the vessel is at sea. Children in such families have a better chance than their parents did of getting some education. In 1974 there were about 4,500 children, of a marine population of about 80,000, going to schools supported by Hong Kong's Fish Marketing Organization.

Wong Kuen Mui's parents are inshore fishers. Their small junk, which is both home and work area for nine people, neither goes far out to sea nor stays for weeks at a time. Such vessels work widely separated fishing grounds in little bays off places like Tai A Chau. Sometimes they may move 20 miles away to try for a school of fish Father Wong knows from experience may be running in a swift channel during the first few nights of a new moon. And on the junk everyone from the five-year-old (who looks after a younger brother or sister) to the aged grandfather must work. To most inshore-fishing families, it seems unprofitable and arduous to arrange for a skilled hand, especially a girl, to go to school.

Wong Kuen Mui expresses occasional sorrow because she did not attend school, yet she is not particularly concerned about her inability to read. She is, figuratively and almost literally, in the same boat with many of her peer group, and although her parents' boat does not yet have TV, there are at least two radios aboard. During the many hours when there are nets to be mended and meals to be prepared, she listens—not just to traditional Cantonese soap operas, but also to modern fiction, feature and news programs. Wong Kuen Mui had little reluctance about talking on any subject when interviewed by a young woman from the Chinese University of Hong Kong only four or five years her senior. This outgoingness is at least in part the result of her informal education through radio as well as frequent visits for marketing and relaxation in Cheung Chau and the bustling fishing port of Aberdeen on Hong Kong Island.

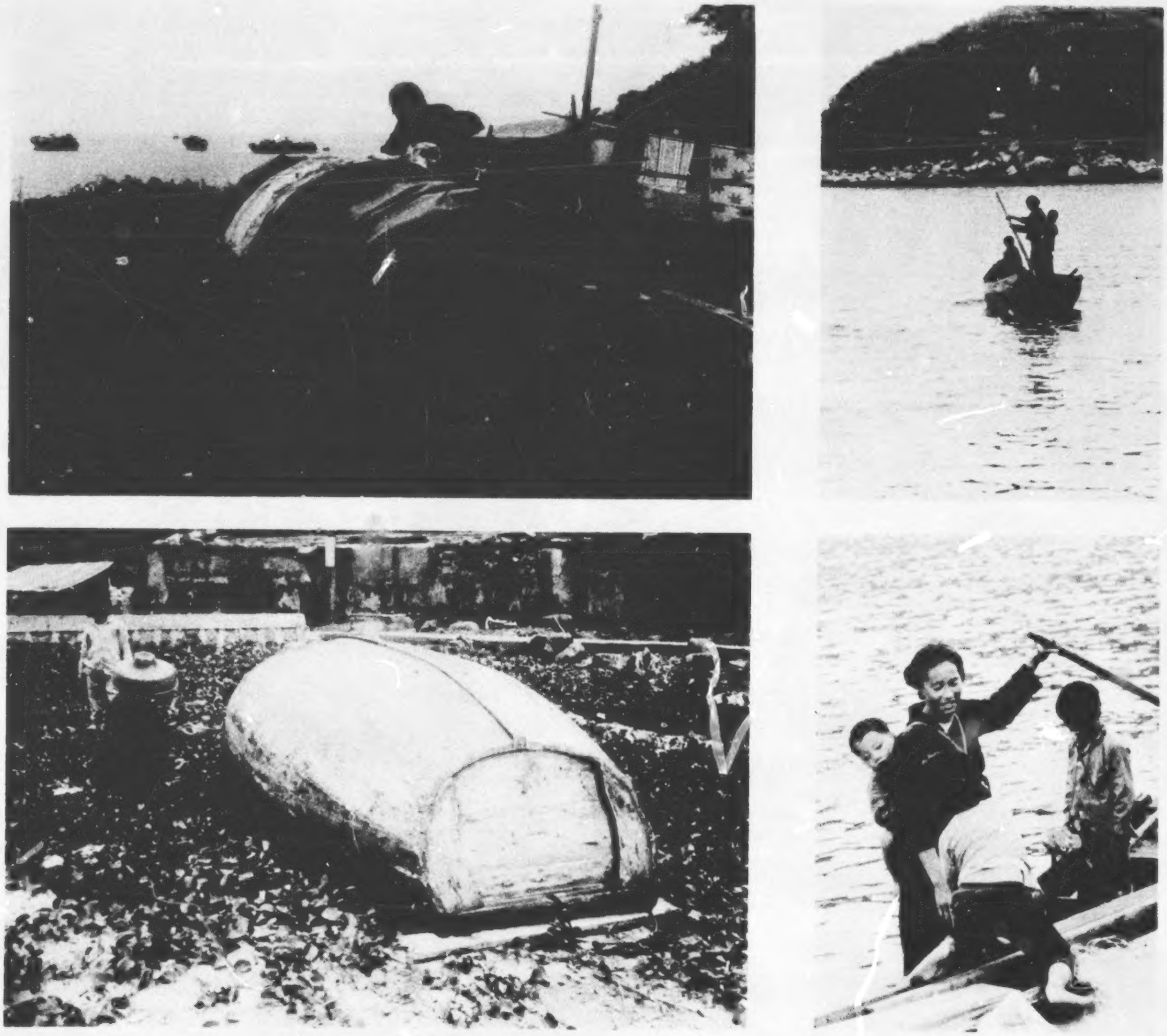
Film Dialogue

I've nothing to think about. We work all the time. We don't have to think about things.

Did you want to go to school?

It's hard to learn to read and write. Now there's no time. I'm sorry I didn't study when I was young.

Interview with Wong Kuen Mui



Women from fishing families.

Film Dialogue

Do you mend nets?

No, I look after the children. She does the nets.

What do you do?

Mend nets – not much else.

Interview with Wong Kuen Mui
and Her Mother

Film Dialogue

When you marry, will you live ashore or continue fishing?

Boat people fish; land people do land things.

Interview with W.K.M.

Women from farming families.

Equality Before the Law

Have changes in Hong Kong brought women equality before the law? The answer is "not quite," but the pace of change is quickening. Concerning marriage and divorce, for example, it was still possible until October 7, 1971 for a man to contract a "Customary Chinese Marriage," (such as the one that bound Chan So Mui to her fisherman husband in the early part of this century). A women could not initiate divorce; her main protection was familial and community pressure. A woman might appeal to the police, but until 1952 there were no women on the Hong Kong police force, and resort to "government" was in any case something to be avoided whenever possible.

In the 1950s and '60s, Chinese women began urging an end to customary marriage, charging that it: (1) "Is discriminatory against the (principal) wife who can be divorced for what are nowadays considered trivial reasons but cannot divorce her husband even on the grounds of desertion or adultery, and who is both socially and financially subservient to her husband" and (2) "Allows and perpetuates the system of concubinage;..." After much debate and many recommendations, a series of reforms in connection with marriage legislation were made and, late in 1971, the Marriage Reform Ordinance became effective. That ordinance ensured that all marriages taking place in the Colony would be monogamous. The ordinance also validated other forms of marriage contracted prior to October 7, 1971, made provision for registration of such marriages, and provided for dissolution of such marriages by common consent.

In about this same period legislation providing for protection of women already married and for their children was strengthened. Under the Separation and Maintenance Orders, if a husband had been convicted of aggravated assault on his wife, had deserted her, had been guilty of "persistent cruelty" to his wife or children, had failed to provide "reasonable maintenance," and "insisted on having sexual intercourse" with his wife "while suffering from venereal disease, and knowing that he was so suffering," had compelled his wife to "submit to prostitution," or had become a "habitual drunkard, or a drug addict," the wife could go to court. But marriages cannot usually be quickly dissolved. Unless it can be determined that the petitioner is likely to suffer "exceptional hardship" or that the respondent has displayed "exceptional depravity," no divorce petition may even be filed until three years after the date of marriage.

Women who marry expect and are expected to have children. There is social pressure to produce one or more male children to carry on her husband's family name. But as the nature of Chinese society in Hong Kong has been changing, so too has the nature or degree of pressure on women (and their husbands) to produce children. As Hong Kong society has modernized, with better health services (the infant mortality rate in 1947 was 102; in 1971 it was 18.4) and with problems of housing space and education costs getting ever more publicity, pressures for large families have become less. Women are no longer automatically blamed if they do not bear children, and a marriage cannot legally be dissolved on the grounds that there have been no children—unless one member has been unwilling or physically unable to take part in sexual intercourse.

Women's Roles: Attitudes and Opportunities

Village women like Fan Gau Mui tend to be reticent when it comes to talking about aspects of their private lives or about concepts which may be controversial or involve vocabulary which they would not normally use in the village. The university graduate who interviewed Fan Gau Mui while she was busy feeding breakfast to her children and aged mother-in-law was sensitive and skilled. She knew that questions about the family budget or birth control could easily inhibit Fan Gau Mui, at least until the village woman's inculcated reticence had worn off after a number of less personal sessions. When the subject of women's liberation came up, Fan Gau Mui said she had never heard of it. (This is most unlikely, and probably Fan Gau Mui pretended ignorance, possibly because she didn't want to talk any more about a somewhat new and possibly controversial topic with a younger woman who was not only better educated but obviously more liberated than herself.)*

Film Dialogue

Women here take care of children, wash clothes, cook rice. The work is never really finished.

When does your husband come home from the sea?

I saw him a week ago.

Does he help with the work?

What can he do, he was home only one night. He may not return for a long time, or he may return soon. That's how it is. Sometimes he's away two or three months at a time.

Have you heard about Women's Liberation?

No.

In this village, do men or women make most of the decisions?

It's about equal.

Interview with Fan Gau Mui

Are females who receive formal educations, either in urban schools or in smaller, rural classrooms significantly different from Widow Chan, Villager Fan, or Boat Girl Wong?

In Hong Kong if a woman can read a newspaper her opportunities in life are considerably expanded. The woman who can thumb her way through a movie magazine or the feature section of a Sunday paper and read that since late 1971 all marriages to be legal must be registered, or that it is possible not only to divorce a cruel husband but also to get support from him, is less likely to suffer abuse. And the ability to turn to a newspaper's "Help Wanted" section and look for a factory job frees a woman from dependency on a brother or a father or a neighbor who can read.

Women in the Labor Force

Literacy is not an obstacle to employment, at least for the low-paying jobs where the employment figures on women seem to cluster. Hong Kong has plenty of working women, although labor statistics are admittedly incomplete. Even these data, however, indicate the important place women have in Hong Kong's labor force. In 1971, the total work force recorded was 1,582,849, with 532,868 women representing one-third of the total. While underreporting of employment makes interpreting these figures risky, it is likely that both the number of women in the industrial work force and the percentage of women employed have been increasing. So too has their membership in labor unions. In 1973 there were 295,735 union members and both the absolute number and percentage of women in the membership had gone up 17 per cent over a ten-year period. The biggest increase in jobs for women has come with the rapid development of specialty manufacturing—particularly of electronic components and wigs.

Among farm and fishing families in the Soko Islands, there is no labor force as it is defined in Hong kong and recorded in government statistics. This does not mean, of course, that rural people do no work; in fact, both women and men work long hours at physically demanding jobs. Moreover, women and men more often perform the same tasks, usually working side by side, than they do in urban, industrialized Hong Kong. On Tai A Chau, regardless of who has the most say in making decisions, physical labor is shared about equally between men and women. The construction of a new cement sidewalk is a case in point. The islanders' attitude toward their work and sex roles is a composite of Maoist thought, Colony-inspired modernism, and the practicality of rural people everywhere.

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*There may be another factor. Chinese generally are suspicious of outsiders. Public opinion polls and on-the-spot television interviews are not a familiar part of Chinese life in Hong Kong, but confidence tricksters, robbers, tax collectors, and needy relatives are. On a fishing junk, where usually only one's own family members can hear, talk can be a bit freer than on land, where walls have ears and both neighbors and children gossip. And it is not many generations ago that some Chinese regarded the camera as a devilish machine which might capture a person's soul along with the body image preserved on paper. Both villagers and city folk have heard stories about, and perhaps even seen, sensationalist "Mondo Cane" type films which distort and exploit the lives of people in foreign lands. It should not be

Almost certainly the vast majority of women working in industry in Hong Kong are single, although there are no legal restrictions against married women and the social strictures have also been breaking down. The fact that there are jobs for women, regardless of marital status, has made women less dependent on men than they were in the Hong Kong (or China) of two, three, and more decades ago. Now a married woman can leave her husband and know that her chances of supporting herself and any children she may have are fairly good. Thus economic opportunities, mainly in the factories, have contributed to the liberation of women in Hong Kong as they have women elsewhere.

However, neither the factory job (often in a piece work sweatshop paying less than US$0.40 an hour in a 40- to 50-hour week) which a young woman with a few years of schooling may qualify for, nor the executive secretarial position (in an air-conditioned office paying as much as US$700.00 a month) guarantees a woman "liberation" from her family—be it parents or husband and children. In fact, a job may be as much a tie to family obligations as it is an opportunity to escape from family control.

A daughter, or a son, despite considerable loosening in the Chinese family system, is still expected to subordinate her or his wishes and needs to those of the family. Except in cases of death, desertion, divorce, or disability, fathers still head Chinese families. In most families they have the dominant voice, although their image as total authority is weakening. Moreover, even while a daughter is expected to contribute most of her salary to the family, the fact that she earns money from an outside source gives her much more status than if she were working within the family. And in cases where daughters earn more than either parent, they may also be better able—through formal education or practical experience—to cope with the family's problems. These women occupy a very special position within the family and among neighbors and relatives. They are, for example, apt to wait longer before marrying than those who do not contribute to the family's income. Census figures in Hong Kong seem to bear this out; in the 1970s women marrying for the first time tend to be about three years older than was the average before 1941.

Whereas family pressure to retain a wage earner may be the dominant reason for the tendency to marry later, another factor is certainly that some women wage earners enjoy the improved status and degree of freedom that independent income implies.

surprising that many Chinese, especially women, appear to Western audiences as somewhat stiff, diffident, or even hostile when they are being filmed.

Film Dialogue

But now you are well off?

Yes, now we are well off. People can make money fishing today. But in the past fish brought us only seven cents a pound. Even if you worked all day you couldn't earn 40 cents.

Which do you prefer, the present or the past?

The present is much better.

Interview with Chan So Mui

Film Dialogue

Do you make your own clothes?

They're ready-made.

Are they expensive?

Yes, very. If I run short of money I sometimes ask my father.

Interview with Wong Kuen Mui

Another change both demonstrating and affecting the betterment of women's status in Hong Kong is the participation of women in the teaching profession. In 1958 the number of women teaching from kindergarten through post-secondary level for the first time surpassed the number of men by 6,605 to 6,431. Since then the ratio of women in the teaching profession has continued to increase; in 1973 there were 22,327 women teaching, compared to only 13,744 men. Men still outnumber women in secondary schools and on through university level, but it is in the primary schools, where most of Hong Kong's students are, that value judgments are most subject to feminine influences. On Tai A Chau, however, the primary school teacher was a man.

While the factory has helped liberate many women with low educational levels, the typewriter and the steno pad have played a similar role for those who manage to get at least through high school and perhaps some technical and vocational training. A quarter of a century ago, Hong Kong was primarily a trading and transhipment center which moved but did not produce many goods. In the last 25 years Hong Kong has become an aggressive and sophisticated producer and marketer of textiles, electrical equipment, and other light industrial products, and an important commercial base. The lives and fortunes of these commercial firms depend on words and figures on paper. By and large the shorthand, typing, filing, and information retrieval services of women keep vital letters and documents flowing and in order. There are no reliable figures on the number of clerical workers at all levels in Hong Kong, but certainly there are tens of thousands. At the end of 1974 there were more than 36,000 registered companies in Hong Kong. It is a safe bet that every registered company had at least one woman employed in either a clerical or secretarial capacity, and many large commercial firms have dozens of women employees. These include married women too. Some husbands and some parents or in-laws or older relatives object to wives working, but generally, there is no serious objection. And why not? Money.

Economic Security

Hong Kong is a money-minded town. It is a place where rents may go up, the stock market may go bust, or civil disorder—or the order of someone in Peking—may bring a sudden end to bourgeois life so quickly that there may not be enough time to buy an airplane ticket. Extra money and diversification of interests (both financial and in fields of endeavor) are looked on favorably. Memories and fears of husbands taking concubines, or skipping out and never coming back, or dying from hypertension and not leaving a will are strong in urban Hong Kong. Cash or property in reserve for family emergencies are considered a very good idea. Women who have an opportunity to accumulate funds for the unknown future are encouraged to do so.

Residential property is a favorite investment. Over the years property values have continued to rise in Hong Kong, and landlords have fared very well. A woman who buys an apartment (there are very few single family dwellings in urban Hong Kong) acquires a solid chunk of economic and legal security. Property purchased in her name is hers, and her husband cannot legally touch it or the income from it. If a husband runs away, becomes intolerable, or dies without leaving a will, a woman at least has a place she can move into quickly. No wonder then that in an eight-year period (1956-1963) more than half the purchases of new apartments in Hong Kong were in the names of women, and a third of the purchasers were married women.

Equality of property rights does not yet extend to equal pay for equal work, but change has been taking place. After many years of struggle women in certain work categories have won their fight for pay equal to that of men doing the same job. The clearest examples of this are women employed by the Hong Kong government. Civil servants in Hong Kong, by virtue of working where employees can pressure their employer, have a considerable advantage over private enterprise employees in seeking long-range benefits. Women in the Hong Kong civil service—especially teachers, doctors, and nurses—have fought for years to get what they considered equal rights, including equal pay. Starting on April 1, 1975 (a new fiscal year), after five years of gradual increases, all women in government service received the same pay as their male counterparts.

Health Care and Family Planning

Hong Kong women may also begin to expect decent maternal and child care, birth control information and devices, and the right to an abortion. The colony has rather good medical services at little or no cost. The better a woman's education and the more extensive her connections, the less difficult it is to get the health services which are available. The keys are whom and how much one knows.

Free clinics provide advice on birth control and contraceptives, and contraceptives are sold openly in all pharmacies. In 1974, after years of timid support for family planning, the Hong Kong government made the limitation of birth its official concern, and services have expanded. The main problem is that women with low education levels have had trouble with the pill. Mostly, says one gynecologist, the problem comes with women who use the pill irregularly—in some cases basing their use of the pill on the frequency with which they have intercourse.

Efforts to legalize abortion have met the same caution and slowness as did marriage reform, salary parity, and family planning. After years of agonizing—literally, on the part of unwilling mothers whose choices included reliance on quacks, expensive "specialists," or a trip to communist Canton—Hong Kong

Homes on land (above) and at sea (below).

in 1973 made abortion legal under limited circumstances. Now a woman may have an abortion if two doctors will sign a statement that failure to terminate the pregnancy would endanger her health.

For a few women knowledge of birth control and easy access to contraceptives, along with the chance to work and earn, may provide an opportunity for greater sexual freedom. The percentage of unmarried women who have sexual relations with their boy friends is almost certainly much lower than in America or Europe, for the double standard demanding female virginity, while approving male promiscuity, is one feature of old Chinese culture still retained.

New Directions

There is no sure way to estimate the level of expectations and discontent among Hong Kong's young men and women. Certainly the cumulative effects of a changing society, with new ideas being spread through formal education and the media, are straining the fabric of traditional Chinese society in Hong Kong. The days of women like Chan So Mui are, literally, numbered. She no longer lives on Tai A Chau, where her beached sampan stood on blocks next to her granddaughter's house. She has gone into Cheung Chau to stay with one of her sons and die there.

Fan Gau Mui is still on Tai A Chau. Her husband is still home only a few days each year, spending most of his time working on ocean-going cargo ships. She has four children, a house, and an elderly mother-in-law to tend. Whereas she is stuck, she says her children will all go to school. Fan Gau Mui knows that times have already changed and that her children must be prepared for a different world.

Wong Kuen Mui is still on a fishing junk, but no longer that of her parents. In the autumn of 1974 she and her fiance were married. They live on his family's boat, which works out of Aberdeen Harbor on Hong Kong Island. She will probably never learn to read, although her younger sisters and brothers have been going to the little school on Tai A Chau. Chances are that *her* children will be educated and that the process of change affecting the status of both women and men in the entire China Coast area will accelerate.

Fan Gau Mui's children.

CHINA COAST

5

Beliefs

ISLAND FISHPOND

by LOREN FESSLER

Tai A Chau is one of about 235 islands in Hong Kong Territory on the South China Coast near the Pearl River Estuary. Tai (Big) and Shiu (Little) A Chau, each less than half a square mile in area, are isolated on the far rim of an administrative system which has at best never been very strong. Until the 1960s, the community on these Soko Islands supported themselves by subsistence agriculture and fishing. As in most rural areas, life there was simple and hard, and little had changed in the uncertain hundreds of years since people had started living on the coastal islands of South China.*

Today about 220 landpeople and fisherfolk call Tai A Chau their home.** There are two villages on the island, aptly named Upper and Lower Village. Lower Village, a group of buildings clustered around a beach and near the island's typhoon shelter and dock, is made up largely of people who settled there since the Chinese Communists came to power on the mainland in 1949. Except for the schoolhouse and one family with children, it is almost an old people's home. Upper Village, less than 100 feet above sea level but clearly dominant economically as well as physically, is the locus of village power. Roughly half way between the two villages is Mr. Leung's general store, a common point of contact for island residents and for land- and boatpeople.

Ng Sing Yao.

Mr. Ng Sing Yao, whom the colony government recognizes as Village Representative or Chief, is the spokesman for Tai A Chau's interests. His leadership is acknowledged both by fishermen like Wong Fo Hei, who use the harbor as their base, and the farmers who raise pigs or cultivate pineapples on the island. The fishing folk who operate semi-mechanized junks such as that of the Wong family, are concerned about declining catch—possibly a result of overfishing and pollution—and their decreasing ability to compete with the more modern craft in the Hong Kong fishing fleet. The farmers' chief interests center on better transport to markets at Cheung Chau or in Hong Kong, and support for schools, health services and island development projects such as improving the dock area and building a freshwater fishpond.

The two populations, one deriving its subsistence from the land, the other from the sea, live in the same state of symbiosis that has prevailed for centuries. Each accommodates to the other only as much as is absolutely necessary, clinging tenaciously to the belief that his own is the only really "good" life. In fact, the fisherman's traditional way of life is eroding most rapidly, and the children who skip nimbly from boat to land to school and back*** are symbolic of the impending changes. There was a time within the memory of the Ng and Wong families, however, when neither the relationship between the two groups nor the standard of living was as easy as it is today.

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*See "Island in the China Sea," film essay Appendix.

**Shiu A Chau has a fluctuating population of only three to six persons. Similarly many "residents" of Tai A Chau work and live in Cheung Chau or Hong Kong or Kowloon, returning briefly only once or twice a year.

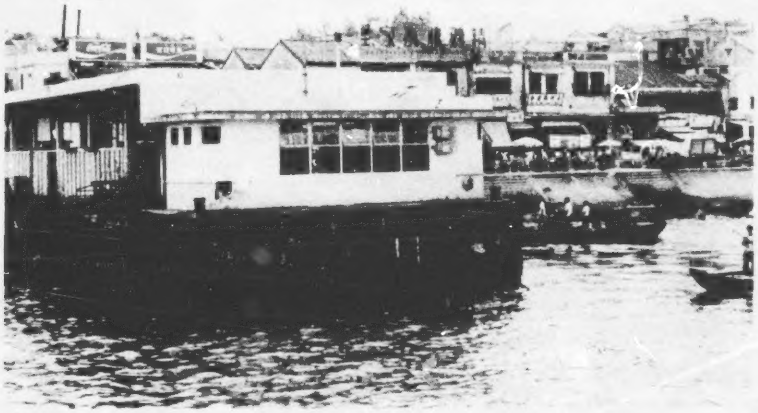
***See "Hoy Fok and the Island School," film and film essay.

Legacy of a Landlord

When the British assumed control of Tai A Chau in 1898, most of the land rested with a family named Chan, specifically with Chan Fuk Tsueng.* There were a few other propertied families: members of the Fung, the Chau and the Yong** families had a smaller number of registered leaseholders. Only one other family appears frequently in the Tai A Chau land list—the Ng family. Six different members of that family, either singly or as partners, held leases to a total of ten pieces of land, while Ng Tin Fat owned a superstructure on one of the *mathut**** lots held by Landlord Chan. Today the Chan family have all left the island, and their sale of property for the community fishpond represents the family's final break with the land and people of Tai A Chau. The Ng family has remained in the person of Tai A Chau's Village Representative, Ng Sing Yao and a few other residents of the Upper Village.

Life under Landlord Chan

Between 1898 and 1941, when the Japanese Occupation began, little changed in the lives of Tai A Chau's inhabitants, despite the earth-shaking events that were taking place elsewhere in China. Ng Sing Yao, who says his family has lived in Tai A Chau "several hundred years," tilling the land and working hard just to stay alive, paints a bleak picture of life on the island when he was a boy. Landlord Chan, he says, controlled both the agricultural land and the village market. "If the landlord didn't give people work, there was no way to live," says Ng. "At that time people had nothing to get started with on their own, no pigs or other animals." Moreover, Landlord Chan owned the only boat available for carrying people and goods between Tai A Chau and the closest market town,



The ferry landing at Cheung Chan, the closest market town to Tai A Chau.

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*In 1904, Landlord Chan held more leases to Tai A Chau property than any other person listed in the registry. In addition to being the lessee of four lots of "padi" slightly over an acre in area, he held seven "mathut" lots of 0.1 acres each with the "superstructures" owned by others. The land record book listed his address as "Nam T'au." This town was then an administrative center with a magistrate's "yamen," a treasury, a jail, and an Imperial examination hall — less than ten miles west and north of the western end of the Hong Kong-China land frontier. However, either Landlord Chan or some of his relatives maintained a residence on Tai A Chau. For, in addition to holding the lease to the island's only threshing floor, he was also the lessee of a first-class .04-acre lot with house. That gave the Chan family 13 lots, and while the temple on Lot No. 26 was listed as Tai A Chau community property, the recorded manager was none other than Chan Fuk Tsueng. Even on the basis of these sketchy records, this member of the Chan clan was obviously a man of substance.

**This is the romanization originally used in the land record book. Other common Cantonese romanizations of this family name are Yeung and Yeong.

***A *"mathut"* and *"matshet"* are buildings made with a wooden or bamboo frame. Slides are made of woven "mat" materials like split bamboo, rushes, etc. Roofs can be either of mat or thatch material.

Cheung Chau, a three-hour sail in good weather. Hong Kong government representatives came only when it was time to collect the Crown rents on the leases recorded in the Tai A Chau land book.

That was in the 1930s, a time when the sailing junk was still the main form of water transport in the area. The portable radio was unknown, and almost all rural people were illiterate. Tai A Chau, with a resident land population of perhaps 100 men, women, and children before the war, was an isolated bit of old China. On some of the land two rice crops a year could be grown. Other fields yielded only one crop. Gardens produced sweet potatoes, onions, cabbages, and mustard greens for daily consumption. A few papaya and banana trees flourished. Marine life in those days, say the villagers, was more plentiful than now. Islanders set out traps for squid and crabs. Sometimes they used set lines for fish feeding close to shore.

In those days the anchorage at Tai A Chau held many more fishing junks than it does now, and all the beaches on the island were lined with rows and rows of racks for drying and salting fish. Then, as now, the farmers traded their vegetables with fishing families on the junks for fish. Most farmers and fishermen rarely ate pork more than a few times a year—at Chinese New Years and one or two festivals, when the now derelict temple was the religious and entertainment center of the community.

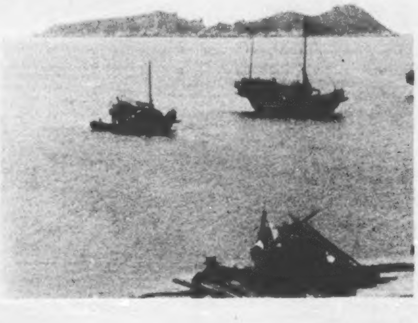
When the Japanese took Hong Kong in December 1941, Tai A Chau entered upon a "time of troubles." Had the Japanese been able to maintain order and prosperity in Hong Kong, and not oppressed the Chinese population, many Chinese would probably not have objected to changing one colonial master for another. On Tai A Chau, for instance, Landlord Chan may well have been ready to bend with the political wind. When the Japanese landed, so one story goes, he and several others went to meet them, prepared to give them money and food as evidence of their willingness to cooperate. For some reason the Japanese were not then interested in cooperation and opened fire instead, killing a number of people, probably Landlord Chan among them.

After the war, the Hong Kong government resumed its general laissez-faire administrative policies. What was good for trade was good for Hong Kong. Government taxes and land rents, being low, should be paid on time. Citizens who obeyed the law could expect reasonable protection, but they shouldn't expect too much from the government in the way of social welfare, education, or medical care. As in prewar days, aside from occasional police patrols, the one sure contact Tai A Chau had with the Hong Kong bureaucracy was the annual arrival of the bills for Crown rent on the lots listed in the land record book.

The bills were delivered by messenger, probably via the Marine Police patrols. The bills, made out according to the last change recorded in the land book (many unchanged since 1904), always

Temple on Tai A. Chau.

The harbor at Tai A Chau.



Government helicopter brings a weekly paper to Tai A Chau.

totaled the same amount—HK$30.18, now about US$6.00. While that amount seems small today, ready cash was often a problem for the islanders. There were also questions about why they should pay land rents issued in the name of Landlord Chan. On at least one occasion the rents were unpaid long enough for the government to threaten resumption of land for which rents were unpaid. At that point a British official who was interested in the problems of the islanders intervened. He paid the overdue rent himself and advised the islanders that it would be cheaper and less complicated in the long run to pay the old Crown rents than to get involved in renegotiating for use of the land.

To Chinese villagers, accustomed by tradition to the idea that the best government is the least government, this made sense. As the years went by and the bills came in unchanged, the villagers paid with no further question. (This seemingly sensible compliance with well-meant advice was to lead to frustrating problems later on, when the islanders wanted to build a new fishpond.)

Hong Kong's "New Deal"

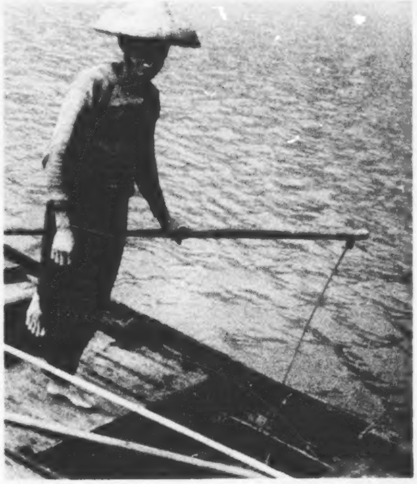
During the early sixties, government involvement in the economy of outlying places like the Soko Islands began to increase. Responding to requests for help to better protect West Bay during storms, the Public Works Department built a stone and cement typhoon shelter on the bay's north side. On the south side, where there was only a small rock landing platform, the government provided for constructing a dock, and funds for village labor and materials, to build the first portions of a cement pathway connecting it with the Upper Village.

The government also began to extend some technical and financial help for agriculture. In 1963 the Agriculture and Fisheries Department helped get Tai A Chau farmers started in the business of pineapple raising. Every year since then the island has produced a pineapple crop. Overall, however, agriculture on Tai A Chau has continued to decline. First, able-bodied males (and some females) tend to leave the island for wage labor in Hong Kong or elsewhere. Second, the lack of a regular supply of water adequate for irrigation limits the type and number of cultivable crops, particularly rice. Irrigation also is labor intensive and could not compete with the lure of high urban wages to keep an adequate work force on the island. Third, since the late 1940s and early '50s, villagers have relied more on animal husbandry—raising pigs, cattle, or fish—than on tilling the land.

The Hong Kong Colony government has long sought to insure stability in the area by providing a regular supply of essential commodities—including rice. While the price of rice has risen over the years, the increase has been gradual. At the same time, employment opportunities in a booming Hong Kong economy have increased. Workers in light industry or construction do not become rich overnight, but the slowly increased wages they get on a sustained basis make the returns they would have gotten for a similar number of hours of farm work tiny by comparison. There is even more money to be made working on ships* or going to England to work in Chinese restaurants. Consequently thousands of men like Ng Sing Yao leave their fields and villages to the care of womenfolk and aging parents while they go off to earn money which will not only buy rice but provide for investment capital as well.

On Tai A Chau, as elsewhere in the Colony, some of the land formerly used for rice is now planted either with green vegetables, peanuts, or tubers like sweet potatoes. Because there is no regular boat service to take produce to the Cheung Chau market, islanders consume most of the vegetables they grow themselves and sell small amounts of them to families on fishing junks in the harbor. There is terraced land, formerly used for padi, which could be planted to vegetables, but much of it lies fallow. It is unlikely today that the Soko Islands and their land and sea inhabitants will ever again be so isolated from urban markets that the economy will revert to subsistence on exclusively island resources.

The boatpeople like those at Tai A Chau also have problems. All the approximately 18 fishing junks homing there now use diesel engines. This increases their range, theoretically making possible much larger daily catches than in the days of sail. They can also go to markets like Cheung Chau and Tai O to sell their live and fresh fish. There they are offered a greater range of foodstuffs in the big markets at better prices than on Tai A Chau. While they are now more mobile, they are also more exposed to new ways of livelihood than in the old days, and the number of fishermen like those at Tai A Chau is decreasing. Families forced out of the industry by economic competition, debt, or accident have had to seek work ashore, and for people like Wong Fo Hei this is not a happy prospect.



Wong Fo Hei

Film Dialogue (from "Island in the China Sea")

We've been fishermen for generations . . . . If we tried to find work on land, say as construction workers, we would have a hard time. We don't know how to work on land . . . . Take, for instance, growing rice. We don't know anything about sowing seeds. But the land people have known about it since they were young. It's the same with fishing. If you are not born to a profession, you'll not be successful at it.

Wong Fo Hei

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*See "Three Island Women," film and film essay.

Film Biography

Ng Sing Yao, Village Representative

Ng Sing Yao.

Ng Sing Yao was about 13 years old when the Japanese overran Tai A Chau. He remembers that he and others ran "way up on the mountain" and spent several days hiding in some small caves until they were sure the Japanese had gone. When they returned to Upper Village, they found their houses burned and many of their belongings, including chickens, carried away. The Lower Village had been similarly sacked and burned.

Ng Sing Yao, his bitterness only occasionally showing through a middle-aged mellowness, recalls he was so hungry for so long that several times he thought he was going to die. (Four families on Tai A Chau, totaling 26 persons, reportedly died of starvation during the war.) When he was about 15 he managed to get to the fishing town of Tai O on Lantao Island, about eight miles to the northwest, but it was almost impossible to find work. Consequently young Ng spent many long hungry hours begging for food.Then one day he had a great bit of luck. Near the market he encountered an elder sister. She was married and living in a village some miles away from Tai O. She took pity on her younger brother and let him live and work in her home. "That kindness," says Ng, "saved my life."

After the Japanese surrender Ng Sing Yao, who had left Tai A Chau a frightened hungry boy, returned as a husky hardened young man. When no members of the Chan family came back, the villagers were able to get a bigger share of the crops from the land than they had previously. But they needed money to rebuild their damaged houses, to buy seed and basic commodities like cooking oil, salt, as well as pigs and cattle. So, when Ng Sing Yao was about 20, he and Cousin Ng Kam Chuen borrowed HK$400 (then about US$70.00) from Buddhist nuns on Lantao. The interest rate, says Ng Sing Yao, was 10 per cent per month. They used the money to buy baby pigs and with them began what is still a major agricultural activity on Tai A Chau.

Sow and piglets.

Pig raising is a seemingly simple but highly labor-intensive and frequently risky business. A mature sow or boar grunting around in a village path looks like a very sturdy animal and indeed it is. A grown pig can survive and even grow by scavenging garbage and rooting in the underbrush. But only a limited number of pigs can survive by scavenging, and lean pigs do not fetch good prices at market time. To make money raising pigs, a farmer must keep a number of sows and have the services of a good boar. He must be ready to spend long hours cooking, feeding, cleaning, attending to births, giving inoculations, and generally insuring the survival of what begin as tiny animals highly susceptible to illness from excesses of cold or heat or exposure to a variety of porcine ailments.

Ng Sing Yao and his cousin worked hard. To pay off their loan as rapidly as possible, at first they sold most of each litter, keeping back only a few sows in order to increase the size of their herd. Eventually they accumulated enough capital to buy a used motorized fishing junk. This venture into fishing at a time when very few junks were motorized reveals the willingness of these two men to try new things. Their failure to make enough money to keep going reveals something about their inexperience and the difficulty of landmen trying to learn a completely new way of making a living.

The attempt to become fishermen did eventually yield the cousins some benefit. Although their catches had been poor, the two men did become competent sailors. They also acquired the necessary Hong Kong Marine Department certificates to qualify them to register for jobs as seamen on cargo ships sailing around the world. After selling their fishing boat, therefore, they joined a Hong Kong leftist seaman's union and went to sea.

By this time both Ng Sing Yao and Ng Kam Chuen were married. While they sailed and learned something about the world outside Hong Kong, they carefully saved their pay to take back to Tai A Chau. That money went to buy livestock, cattle as well as pigs, to begin commercial cultivation of pineapples, and to build improved housing for their families and their animals. By accumulating capital themselves, these men were trying to make sure that never again would they be at the mercy of capitalists like Landlord Chan.

Like farmers everywhere Ng Sing Yao has mixed opinions about government-supported effort, such as pineapple cultivation, to increase the villagers' income. He admits that pineapples do not require intensive labor. The period of most intensive labor is in late summer, when the crop is ready for harvest. Moreover, the island's young people—both school children on the island and older ones in secondary schools in Hong Kong—are on holiday then and can pick the pineapples and carry them to the dock for transport to the market in Hong Kong. Tending the crop between planting and harvest, making sure that the blossoms are nipped at the right time to produce a larger fruit instead of going to seed, is not demanding.

The biggest problem, Ng Sing Yao says, is timing the pineapple harvest and competition from other areas. One year, which he remembers well, most of the Hong Kong area crops ripened about the same time. The Tai A Chau crop was picked late and by the time the islanders got the crop to market in Hong Kong, there was literally a sticky glut. The villagers ended up paying to have part of their over-ripe fruit hauled away from the market and dumped as garbage. It was a bad experience. But both the villagers and government have since sought ways to broaden the island's economic base and pineapples remain as one of the worthwhile risks in an economy where no venture is easy or sure.

Film Biography, Ng Kam Chuen

Ng Kam Chuen, on first meeting, gives the impression of being a man who is physically and mentally tough. His eyes, except for the rare moments when he laughs or smiles, are cool and hard. He moves with the measured, springy grace of a man accustomed to but not bent by hard labor. There are flecks of gray in his close-cropped hair. His chunky, calloused hands and strong white teeth are slightly nicotine-stained. He frequently wears a lacquered woven rattan safety hat of the kind seen in pictures of workers in China's Taching oil fields or other places requiring protective headgear.

Unlike his cousin Ng Sing Yao, who can only write his name and read a few simple Chinese characters, Ng Kam Chuen has a fairly good education. He reads modern journals and formally written official documents with equal ease. He writes characters readily and with a strong sure style. Ng Kam Chuen believes strongly in formal education, and one of his first missions when he was Village Representative in the late '50s was to get a school for Tai A Chau. He remains an activist, following current events carefully and advising Ng Sing Yao.

Ng Sing Yao inspecting a pineapple crop.

Ng Kam Chuen.

Tai A Chau, Upper Village, August 1974

Film Dialogue

If you travel southwest from Hong Kong for about three hours by junk or small launch, you come to the Soko Islands. People live on the edge of two worlds. Although legally under British rule and a part of Hong Kong Colony, the islands touch the territorial waters of the People's Republic of China.

The Soko island people live mainly by farming and offshore fishing. They supplement their daily needs with goods from both Hong Kong and Mainland China.

In recent years one of the main goals of the villagers has been to enlarge the community freshwater fishpond. The village chief, Mr. Ng Sing Yao, has been the leader and main organizer of the project.

Narrator

Tai A Chau, Lower Village, August 1974

Film Dialogue

This island community is a meeting ground for two ideologies. British law prevails, but Chairman Mao's teachings are read and listened to on the island. Fishermen from Chinese communes, whose boats are double-licensed for Chinese and British waters, frequently shelter in the islands' harbor. Radio Canton supplies weather reports, as well as news programs and revolutionary opera music. Crewman use the island both for recreation and mending nets. Several island children are away in Canton for secondary school. During the Cultural Revolution Red Guards from Chinese territory came ashore and gave lectures. They attacked traditional beliefs as reactionary and defaced the idol in a harbor shrine.

The ideology of the British government makes its presence felt by various services. A clinic ship with a doctor aboard calls monthly. A helicopter also flies over the island once a week to drop a free government newspaper.

Hong Kong social welfare officers visit the island occasionally and provide assistance for needy villagers. The village chief in addition to organizing such projects as the fishpond, works as a local welfare guardian in cases dealing with elderly people.

Tai A Chau islanders building a cement walkway along their typhoon shelter.

The Cultural Revolution

Despite the flurry of small projects between 1945 and 1967, there was little government involvement in Tai A Chau that really touched and changed the lives of its residents. It was, in short, just another poor island in the Hong Kong group, too far down the priority list to count for much. But the impact in Hong Kong of the Cultural Revolution in the People's Republic of China changed that. Red guards visited Hong Kong's outlying islands—Tai A Chau among them. Dozens of anti-British slogans were painted on rocks and walls. The figurine in the small, little-used shrine on Tai A Chau was damaged and defaced. On October 1, 1967, the eighteenth anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic, children on the island sported Mao badges on their shirts. Presumably there were meetings and speeches condemning British colonialism, imperialism of all kinds, and all capitalist "running dogs." There are allegations that at least one person from Tai A Chau was involved in a bombing in Cheung Chau.

Hong Kong's initial response was a show of force. Police, backed up by military forces, stepped up their routine visits. If they had evidence of illegal activity, they made arrests or let it be known that certain persons were wanted, as the British put it, "to assist with enquiries." On Tai A Chau, as on other places on the Hong Kong-China border, British troops came, set up camp, and ran penetration patrols "to show the flag."

The British also played politics by working with civilian and police officials who were familiar with local situations and stepping up programs to better local living conditions. On Tai A Chau the special military-civilian teams set up an electric generator to run wire for lighting houses in both Upper Village (where the generator was housed in a concrete shelter) and Lower Village. Other improvements followed quickly. The military put in about a dozen street lights along the approximately quarter mile of cement walkway leading down from Upper Village to the deck at West Bay. An electric pump was installed to bring water from the main well and store it in a new concrete tank above Upper Village. Pipes were run from the storage tank to the small separate buildings where the people in Upper Village do their cooking and bathing; a single pipe was run along the walkway to Lower Village and terminated by the schoolhouse (the flow of water is controlled in Upper Village).

Beginning in 1969, in response to requests from villagers and advice from local officials, the government extended limited medical facilities to the island. Now a ship staffed with a doctor and nurses from the Medical and Health Department visits Tai A Chau once a month. Consultations, with simple treatment and medicines, are free. People requiring more intensive or complicated treatment are urged to go to a government clinic at Cheung Chau. The hospital ship is one of the few government services which benefits fishermen about as much as land dwellers. Most of the other

A government ship delivers cement for walkways.

projects—electric power for light and water pumping, extensions on the dock and typhoon shelter, and the cement walkways are more helpful to the landpeople. The cement walkway along the edge of the typhoon shelter, however, makes passable what had long been a narrow and difficult trail much used by the fishermen, coming ashore to get fresh water. While the men, women and children from the village were hauling rocks and sand and pouring cement for this walkway, Wong Fo Hei passed them by on his way to fetch water. Thanks to their work, his job was considerably easier, but he made no offer to help.

FILM
LINK

Building the Fishpond

By far the most extensive project ever to be undertaken on Tai A Chau was Ng Sing Yao's scheme to expand the Upper Village's existing freshwater fishpond for commercial use.

There had always been some fish in the pond, but the supply had never been considered sufficient for a regular income. With assistance from a Cantonese-speaking government officer with whom he had developed a good personal relationship, Ng soon had specialists from the Agriculture and Fisheries Department studying the project's feasibility. They took samples of the water in the existing pond, examined the fish already growing there, and ran a number of tests to see what kind of fish would grow best. Engineers studied the pond site to see if it might be enlarged, and how much work would be involved. Eventually, the government approved plans for building a pond which would have a surface of about 50,000 square feet, slightly greater than the area of a North American football field. Agriculture and Fisheries officials estimated that the maximum annual yield should amount to slightly more than one ton, worth roughly HK$9,000 (US$1,800) at the time.

Film Dialogue

Projects like the community fishpond are usually organized on a cooperative basis. The Hong Kong government ships in materials for such things as harbor landing, a small typhoon shelter and cement walkways. The government usually provides funds for villagers who do the hard manual labor. Women get the same pay as men.

Ng Sing Yao

At the proverbial last moment, someone remembered one other detail: since the dam would raise the water level and inundate a fairly large amount of land, might there be any objection from the owners. Ng Sing Yao assured the Colony officials that the matter had been discussed at length and that the villagers were all in favor of it. Moreover, they had paid the land rentals regularly for many years, so there could be no obstacles to the construction of the pond. Still, land records in the District Office Islands had to be checked. It was discovered that roughly half the area to be flooded was Lot No. 9, leased in 1904 to Landlord Chan and passed to his heirs. Since the land tax had been paid regularly, there was no question of the Crown resuming (taking back) the land. If heirs could be found, they had a legal right to determine the land's use.

Ng Sing Yao and the villagers were dumbfounded. After all, they pointed out, they had been paying the rent on all the properties on Tai A Chau for more than 20 years. Moreover, they had been doing so at the advice of a British official. The land should be theirs to do with as they pleased. It was logical, but not legal. Government officials promised to help in every way they could.

By the time Landlord Chan's heirs were located and preliminary negotiations had begun, another problem had arisen. Money for the fishpond project was budgeted to be used within a specific period. Arrangements had been made with the British Army to land a bulldozer and engineering crew to do the heavy earth moving on the pond site. But no excavation work could begin until title was clear. And if the work did not begin on time, there was a very good chance that the funds would be transferred elsewhere. If the Tai A Chau fishpond had to be rebudgeted, it might mean a year's delay.

On April 1, 1973, Ng Sing Yao and Ng Kam Chuen met with a member of the Chan family, who refused to visit the island—Ng Sing Yao said he was afraid—but he did name a price, HK$30,000 (US$6,000). The villagers had hoped to pay HK$3,000-5,000 (US$600-$1,000). Equally unsuccessful negotiations followed and

Ng Sing Yao, a villager, and Hong Kong police discuss the site for the fishpond.

the deadline for beginning work drew near. Finally an arrangement was made for Ng Sing Yao and his cousin to meet Chan family representatives at the District Office Islands in Hong Kong. There a land officer would try to help the two sides reach agreement.

No one from the Chan family turned up at the first meeting scheduled. Ng Sing Yao and Ng Kam Chuen waited three hours and then returned to Tai A Chau. That night they held a meeting and told the villagers that they had learned that they would probably have to pay as much as HK$25,000 (US$5,000) for the land. Was the project worth that much? After considerable discussion, the villagers decided that if Ng Sing Yao could get a price of HK$25,000 or less and make arrangements for a small cash down payment with the remainder to be paid later, he should go ahead.

The following day, April 4, 1973, Ng Sing Yao returned to Hong Kong. This time members of the Chan family appeared. A young officer from the District Office Islands made the proper introductory remarks.

The Chan side was represented by a tiny old lady, a couple in their late thirties, and a small child. The couple were clearly city people and looked as if they belonged to the lower income, white-collar class. They were solicitous of "Ah Po" (Granny), as everyone addressed her, and seemingly a bit embarrassed by her. Old Lady Chan was obviously out to get everything possible from the deal. She was a small woman, with a small tight face, small legs and feet, small thin hands, small tight eyes, and a small heart. Looking somewhat over 60 years of age, she wore black pongee trousers, leather slippers with no socks, three sweaters, and small silver earrings. Her hair, patched with gray and white, was short and kept behind her ears with hairpins.

Ng Sing Yao spoke, addressing himself mainly to Chan Hop Kuen, her son. As the two men talked price, the Old Lady Chan, who seemed either not to be listening or unable to hear, broke in.

"No need for all this talk," she said in a flat sharp voice. "If you want to buy for three dollars a foot, then buy. If not, then don't buy."

The young land officer, speaking slowly, clearly, and rather louder than in the beginning, told "Ah Po" that HK$3 per foot was too high a price. In a friendly voice he added that elsewhere in the outlying islands even one dollar a square foot was a good price for such land.

"Three dollars," snorted the old lady, seemingly oblivious to his remarks. When her son, who makes a living as a taxi driver, suggested two dollars, she gave him a baleful look and said, "Impossible."

The talk went on for an hour, with the land officer never losing patience. He brought out a large map of Lantao Island marked with land prices. Old Lady Chan fiddled nervously with her hands, scratched her nose, picked up and set down a small paper bag she kept by her chair and listened only for what she wanted to hear. When the land officer suggested that a fair price might be arrived at by engaging the services of a neutral appraiser, Ah Po's fingers slowed their fidgeting motion. Informed that the appraiser might value the land at far less than a dollar a foot, Old Lady Chan's eyes flashed. She looked up, almost smiled, and then resumed her finger twitching and nose scratching.

At this point the young officer said that people might be a bit tired and suggested a short break. He asked everyone to join him in ten minutes at another office a short distance down the hall.

During the break someone got to Old Lady Chan. When the meeting resumed it was in the office of the District Secretary. There the Secretary sat at his desk, with the young land officer opposite. Ng Sing Yao and Chan Hop Kuen sat together at the side of the desk. The two women were shown to chairs a dozen feet away and said nothing during the brief session which ensued.

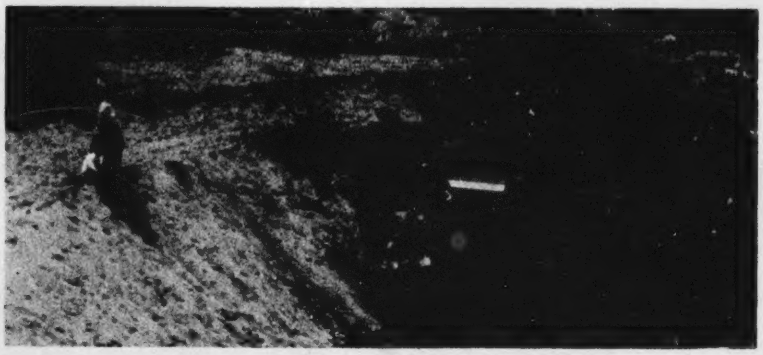
In the space of ten minutes the Secretary wrote out a draft agreement, passed it to the land officer who in turn read it aloud to Ng Sing Yao and Landlord Chan's heir. Under the terms of that agreement the Chans would get HK$20,000 (US$4,000) for their rights to the land. Of that amount HK$3,000 (US$600) was to be paid the following day as a deposit. The remainder was to be paid within a fixed period to finalize the sale. Ng Sing Yao and Chan Hop Kuen both nodded in agreement and then signed. Ng looked grim and a bit pale—as if the ulcer which had been acting up in recent months was bothering him. Chan Hop Kuen looked a bit sheepish—as if he expected his mother to scold him for getting less than she had bargained for.

Film Dialogue

We had hoped to get a bulldozer in here. We need to make it higher on that side down there. It will be flooded so some earth should be moved up. This is private land along here. This is the landlord's property. That part over there is Crown land.

Ng Sing Yao

Within a week an Army landing craft had put a bulldozer ashore at Tai A Chau, and a crew of Gurkha engineers had started moving earth at the pond site. The fishpond was on its way to becoming a reality.



A bulldozer begins the excavation of the pond.

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One big problem remained: where was the village going to get HK$17,000 (US$3,400) to pay for its share of Landlord Chan's legacy? That problem was to bother Ng Sing Yao, signatory to the sale agreement, and the other villagers for another two years.

Meanwhile, a ruggedly individualistic couple named Lok, who live in Lower Village, went about their own, private project, a seashore fishpond for raising salt water fish. Mr. Lok did all the stone and cement work himself, bought fingerlings from a dealer in Hong Kong, and was looking forward to a good return on his money. But during the late summer typhoon season in 1973 heavy rains flooded the old man's pond and washed all his fish out to sea. Despite the loss and despite the disapproving attitude of the other villagers, Old Lady Lok, her gimpy legs causing her to move with a crab-like walk, kept on tending her few pigs and sculling about in her sampan to put out set lines and check her fish traps.

When Ng Sing Yao told of Lok's misfortune, he seemed more amused than sorry. Why? That is another of the many small mysteries about Tai A Chau and the people there. Perhaps the Loks, who rarely took part in any community projects, were seen as too individualistic for their own and the island's good.

The success of the community fishpond project now seems assured. In 1975 one of the several foundations and charitable organizations to which the District Office Islands had appealed for help on the fishpond project donated HK$15,000 (US$3,000) leaving the villagers only HK$2,000 and plenty of time to pay.

The government also underwrote the cost of installing a radio telephone service on the island. Now Ng Sing Yao, instead of relying on a visiting patrol craft or making a hurried boat trip to Cheung Chau, can simply phone directly to any other telephone in Hong Kong.

Tai A Chau is now being carried along in the political and economic tow affecting both Hong Kong and China. Thanks to the efforts of the islanders themselves and the Hong Kong government, the landlord's legacy is no longer a millstone from the past but instead offers considerable promise of continuing improvement for Tai A Chau's small population. Moreover, as the people from both villages gather in Ng Sing Yao's house to watch television, they are increasing their awareness of and participation in a world very much more complex than they ever have experienced on Tai A Chau. There are new opportunities for the island population but also anguish. Ng Sing Yao put the problem very well: "We of course would like to live on here, after more than a century's residence here by our ancestors. But the problem is, can we make a living? This needs thinking about."

Mr. Lok building fishpond.

Film Dialogue

The village chief says he would like the Soko islands to become a part of the People's Republic of China. Meanwhile as a practical man, he welcomes the material advantages the British government provides.

Mr. Lok, however, remained disinterested in the village project. He completed his own fishpond, which, in fact, did begin to produce fish. The community fishpond was also successful – although the islanders remained heavily in debt to the absentee landlord.

Narrator

Ng Sing Yao at home, watching television.

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FACES OF CHANGE

Norman N. Miller, General Editor

Manon L. Spitzer, Editor

Contributors:
- Sheldon Appleton
- C. Fred Blake
- William E. Carter
- Norma Diamond
- Louis Dupree
- Nancy Hatch Dupree
- Loren Fessler
- Bernard Gallin
- Martha James Hardman
- Dwight B. Heath
- Asmarom Legesse
- Judith von D. Miller
- Norman N. Miller
- Albert Ravenholt
- Thomas G. Sanders
- Hubert Smith

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